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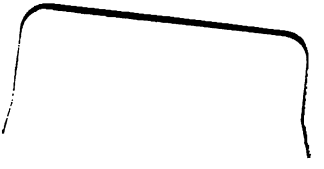
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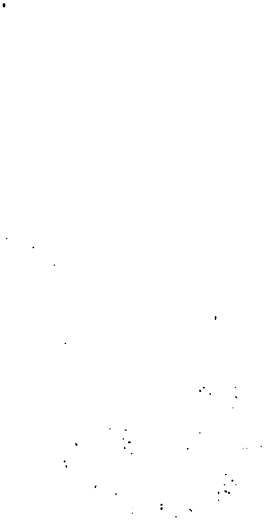
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AMONG THE BRAMBLES







"AMONG THE BRAMBLES,"

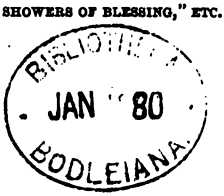
AND OTHER

LESSONS FROM LIFE.

IN WHICH "THE NATURAL" IS USED TO ILLUSTRATE "THE SPIRITUAL."

BY E. C.

AUTHOR OF "LORD, I HEAR OF SHOWERS OF BLESSING," ETC. ETC.



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I HAVE not scrupled to offer to Christian readers the sketches which fill these pages as "Lessons," although the familiar term may carry them back in thought to school life and nursery days.

They will only be acceptable to such as realize that in one sense we are always children, learning of our Heavenly Father in very simple ways, and by very simple means, and that one of the greatest joys and safeguards in this season of education is to carry the spirit of a child with us everywhere.

To myself, the pleasure of lovely scenes and times of rest has been greatly enhanced by their connection with something beyond themselves, and when "the Natural" has pointed to "the Spiritual," it has become instinct with a new life.

"Facts of themselves," writes one, "are barren; it is when these facts pass through

our reflections, and become interwoven with our feelings or our reasonings, that they are the finest illustrations." The world in which we live is a great storehouse of such facts, and the circumstances through which each individual passes bring many of them out into definiteness; but only as the mind, under the influence of the Spirit of God, is enlightened and kept in a receptive state, do we discern the instruction they are intended to convey. To the soul thoroughly awake, the very simplest things have a meaning and a message.

"'Tis said that God's birds now and then
Unseen fly o'er the world of men,
And drop seeds in their way;
But birds of God are not so rare,
For they dwell near us everywhere,
And sweetly sing all day.

"God speaks through every bird that sings,
Not borne on unfamiliar wings
His messages are given;
But common birds that haunt the wood,
If we their language understood,
Would speak to us of heaven."

Although arranged as nearly as possible in the order of the seasons of the year to which they refer, each "Lesson" had a separate origin, unconnected with any other, and is complete in itself, so that the book may find a welcome in

moments of leisure when "pictures" of truth may be more easily received and remembered than more scholarly expositions.

These fragments were originally published in "Woman's Work in the Great Harvest Field," and I should not have ventured to gather them into a basket of their own, had not testimonies come from many hearts that their message was conveyed in a way that specially impressed them.

One of these I can never forget, because of its association with the beloved friend lately called to come up higher.* The link of sympathy was formed before we had any opportunity of personal intercourse, but when that was given for the first time in 1873, in a sweet spot in North Wales, she told me how "*Between the Showers*" had spoken to her, asking whether I thought God's people, as a rule, were called to pass through very severe trial before they learned to rejoice only in Him. Hers was in a remarkable degree a child-like spirit, and very precious now is the memory of that hour of converse, in which we were able to compare together some of the lessons we were receiving from our

* Frances Ridley Havergal.

Divine Teacher,—for we both felt that we were still at school.

It is recorded of Michael Angelo, the great sculptor, that in extreme old age he drew a characteristic device intended to apply to himself, with the motto words beneath it, "YET I AM LEARNING." Accepting such a motto as peculiarly suitable for "the household of faith," there may be not a few readers willing to gather instruction from these simple teachings; and if it is permitted me to awaken thoughts which in the smallest way may bring glory to the Lord Jesus, and help on any fellow-pilgrim in the life and walk and work of faith, great will be my joy, whilst all the praise shall be His to whom alone it is due.

In the closing pages, I have endeavoured to answer inquiries often made in reference to the hymn "Even Me," and have added, at my children's request, a few miscellaneous pieces.

E. C.

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A

I.

Among the Brambles.

A LESSON FOR SOUL-GATHERERS.

"My flock was scattered upon all the face of the Earth, saith the Lord God, and none did search or seek after them."

"*AMONG THE BRAMBLES.*"

A LESSON FOR SOUL-GATHERERS.

"Heed not the thorns that wound thee,
One wore the thorns for thee;
And though the cold world scorn thee,
Patient and hopeful be."

I WAS searching for primroses, and though the time was come when they are usually abundant and easily found, the advance of Spring had been checked by cold winds and inclement weather. Here and there a fair blossom smiled amidst the unopened buds, but it was quickly seized by younger hands than mine, and I walked far without obtaining any.

Everything seemed to whisper one word—"WAITING." The branches of the trees were thickly covered with buds ready to burst, which, leafless though they were, threw over them a flush of life, brought out in different hues under the touch of evening sunlight. The hedges were hiding behind their bareness wonderful preparations for May-day—coils of fern—leaves and blossoms in embryo—seeds swelling and shooting beside the moss and among the ivy, which had kept bright all the winter through. A few early adventurers were gemming the sunny sheltered parts of the wayside with tender green, telling of hawthorn boughs, and bunches and wreaths of roses soon to come; but, taken as a whole, Nature appeared as if holding her

breath, looking and longing for the full loosening of her bonds—the busy, joyful waking up to newness of life.

Yes! silently, but emphatically expressed everywhere was just this, only this—"WAITING." Each little spray tipped with rosy buds, each branch lifting itself up with its undeveloped store of foliage, each tiny germ hidden within the seed, together breathed it forth, and I felt an answering chord touched within.

How close the fellowship in symbol between the voiceless speech of GOD'S handiwork and the unuttered yearnings of His new creation! "*Even we ourselves*, which have the first-fruits of the Spirit, groan within ourselves, WAITING for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of the body"—in that great Resurrection Day, when secret things shall be made manifest, when seeds sown in darkness shall wave in fruitful sheaves in light, when, all hindrances of earth and flesh removed, the powers of soul and body, the impulses and affections of "the hidden man of the heart," shall spring forth in happy freedom and exuberance, to praise and serve and know Him whom we love, as we cannot praise and serve and know Him now.

Practically—for the lessons of Nature are always practical—this hush of expectation seemed to say that, if in true harmony with her attitude of waiting, it will be no idle, sentimental dream of coming joy that we cherish, allowing us to sit with folded hands as the hours pass by. The waiting of the earth for the Spring is a state of *great preparedness* and *unwearing activity*. Through the days and nights of frost and cold those countless buds were formed, which in due time break

asunder the protecting sheath within which they were nurtured, and become full-grown leaves and flowers. So, if believers, ours is a hope that should make us very busy. We are to "go forth, *bearing precious seed*" (Ps. cxxvi. 6); we are to be "*laying up in store*" for ourselves "a good foundation against the time to come" (1 Tim. vi. 19). As in natural things so in spiritual, "He that observeth the wind shall not sow; and he that regardeth the clouds shall not reap" (Eccles. xi. 4). Upon barren lives, as upon dead twigs and masses of rock, the brightest sun will shine in vain. The germ of all that is to break forth hereafter is to be formed now, for only that which is quickened here through living union with Jesus will be raised in glory by and by.

Let us take home to our hearts the question—What is *preparing* in my soul and in my daily life to blossom out in the Day of Resurrection? Beyond all that can be seen of man, the good works manifest beforehand —fruits of the earnest of the Spirit—are there blessed secrets between GOD and myself, growing amid the snows and the shadows of earth, beneath the covering of His shield—buds of love, and faith, and patience, and holiness, which only wait for more warmth and light to expand into full vigour and beauty before Him! "*Seeing that ye look for such things*," this is the word for our waiting time—"BE DILIGENT, that ye may be found of Him in peace, without spot and blameless."

But to return to my primrose search. Passing much that was witnessing of "things not seen as yet," and

going a little out of the beaten track, my eye rested on a dull unpromising-looking bank, nearly covered with tangled masses of the common bramble. I went up to it almost involuntarily, and there, to my surprise, in sweet profusion grew the flowers I had come to seek. They had remained undiscovered, or else were passed by, because of the sharp sentinels which guarded every avenue of approach. Could I gather them? Yes, *if I shrank not from a touch of the thorns.* I wanted the primroses for a dear absent one, and I must not mind a few scratches; so, one by one, they were secured at some cost to myself, but withal a great deal of pleasure, for, when brought together, they made a good-sized bunch, and I knew how their fresh beauty and delicate fragrance would delight my child.

Strange it was to see that, yet unreached, higher up on the bank, amongst the sturdiest growth of thorns, the finest and the fairest were blossoming. A few more scratches and they also became mine. . . .

Will my thoughts seem too child-like if I let these primroses say to dear fellow-workers what they said to me?

Like these fair flowers "amongst the brambles," out of the common track of those who are gathering for Jesus and hidden from general view, there are to be found in the most unsuspected places souls of precious value ready to receive the message of grace, or dear children of GOD, loving His name, but afraid to confess Him. Some of them are in courts where blasphemy is heard from morning till night; some in houses of ill-fame; some in workshops where the boast of the infidel

prevails; some in notoriously ungodly families. They want *to be searched out* (see Ezek. xxxiv. 6), but they are so surrounded with "thorns" that none can reach them without getting wounded in some way or other.

Are we willing in this service to bear "a few scratches" for our dear Lord? to breathe, it may be, the stifling atmosphere of wretched homes, to encounter the rough words of "the sons of Belial" (2 Sam. xxiii. 6), to become familiar with sickness and pain, to "endure hardness" in *many* ways, if only we can help forward the blessed work for which He came from Heaven, who bore the Cross and wore the thorn-crown for us?

Perhaps it is too sadly true that we have loved our ease too well, and made provision that work for the Lord shall not infringe upon comfort, convenience, and even luxury. Let it be so no longer. Let us count no sacrifice too great for the Gospel's sake, and seek to understand the deep earnestness of him who said —"if *by any means* I may save some."

But not alone in low haunts of evil shall we find flowers amongst "thorns." The Lord Himself in His parable of the sower (Luke viii. 14), has, under this figure, characterised "*the cares and riches and pleasures of this life.*" Dear sisters, you who have access to the high places of earth, remember this. Look out for flowers for Jesus amongst the young and gay and courtly ones who are thus entangled, and use the privileges which birth and position give to reach them. Do you not know that rank, and wealth, and the despotism of worldly etiquette, imprison souls within

fences far more prickly than any which grow on the lower banks of society? You cannot deal faithfully with these souls unless you make up your mind not to shrink from being wounded; and yet, without Jesus, they are LOST, as truly as is the most miserable outcast. Ask the Lord to direct you, and give you access to them; do not unnecessarily break through any of the rules of courtesy, but *be courageous* as well as loving and wise, and expect to feel the "thorns." How far beyond the value of any mere conventionality of society is the price of an immortal soul! If one must perish, *which* shall it be?

As an illustration of what may be hidden beneath the entanglements of prosperity, the experience of a gay and happy young bride at a ball given soon after her marriage, may be quoted:—

"I had everything my carnal nature could desire; not a wish was ungratified. I was at the zenith of earthly happiness. On returning from the ball, I took a hasty review of the evening I had passed, as I lay sleepless on my pillow. The glitter—the music—the dance—the excitement—the attention—the pleasure—all passed before me. But, oh! I felt a want I could not describe. I sighed, and whispered to myself these expressive words, 'Is *this* all?' I felt at the moment that if this were all the happiness the world could bestow, then was there a lack I knew not how to supply, and a void I could not fill."

Are there not many of earth's bright ones with a similar experience,—unconsciously waiting for the "word in season" that shall win them to the better portion, and is not that word often too long withheld because it would cost something to speak it?

And then, far off in heathen lands, can we forbear to think of those sisters by thousands in the villages of India, so touchingly brought before us, who cannot be reached without sacrifice, — and millions beside, perishing for lack of knowledge? May the Lord, in this day of His power, prepare many soul-gatherers to go forth, *who will not be dismayed at the prospect of contact with "thorns,"* and make us all more enterprising and more self-forgetting in the search for treasures, over which, when the Lord rejoices in the Day of His appearing, those who have been fellow-workers with Him shall share His exceeding joy!

Thus shall our waiting-time be a blessed season of activity and preparation for what we are all longing for and earnestly expecting—the glorious manifestation of the sons of GOD!

II.

Between the Hills.

A LESSON FOR CHRISTIAN WAYFARERS.

"The valley of Achor for a door of hope."

"*BETWEEN THE HILLS.*"

A LESSON FOR CHRISTIAN WAYFARERS.

"Oh learn that it is only by the lowly
The paths of peace are trod;
If thou would'st keep thy garments pure and holy,
Walk humbly with thy God."

THE day, which in the morning had promised fair, grew dark. Storm-clouds gathered and fell in sweeping showers, and the wind was so high that an umbrella proved useless. I was in a part of the country quite new to me, and though in the intervals of sunshine it looked beautiful, the threatening aspect of the sky conquered the temptation to linger, and after accomplishing the object of my visit, I hastened to reach the place where a conveyance would afford me at once shelter and easy transit home.

From the little fishing hamlet by the sea—the quiet of which is only broken by the song of the waves or the plaintive cry of the ocean birds, where the eye wanders over the blue waters of the great deep, or drinks in pictures of beauty (such as no aquarium can match) in the rock-basins, lined with coralline and paved with whitest sand and pebbles, in which sea-weeds of wondrous colours grow and glow, and little fishes sport and hide—I had to ascend a somewhat steep hill, and shape my course inland. Always sorry to leave the sea, circumstances to-day made me

thankful to feel at each step that I was mounting, and having got over some distance, it was a great help to see the desired end of my journey on the higher ground across the neighbouring downs.

It looked a very little way off, and perhaps at a quickened pace it could be reached before the next hail shower was due. Keeping the mark in view, I climbed on with renewed courage, when suddenly, to my great disappointment, on turning a corner, I found that between me and my hill-top *lay a hitherto unseen valley*, entered by a winding road. What loss of time the valley seemed to involve! I must descend from the height I had reached only to climb it over again, and there was now no hope of escaping the storm.

But whatever was demanded had to be done, for there was no bridge across, and the valley was the *only* road to the hill. So without venturing to murmur, I accepted the necessity before me and went down, down to the lower level, cheered ever by the remembrance that though now out of sight, the hill-top was still at every step drawing nearer.

Ere I could mount again, the threatening storm had burst. Pitilessly the rain and wind swept over the open moor, and I had to confess then that *it was good to be in the valley.* There was shelter there and quiet, and though I only looked at it with a traveller's eye, I could see that its banks were blossoming with early flowers, and that a stream was close at hand for those who dwelt therein.

As soon as the heavy drops ceased to fall I came forth from my covert by the road-side, and, turning

once more towards the hill, the first object that met my gaze was a rainbow—that wondrous pledge of covenant mercy to this sin-stained, storm-tossed earth. How it lightened the last climb to have this bow of promise before me!

It was laid on my heart, as I journeyed on, to make some use of this little experience, if perchance, through its means, the Lord might permit "a word in season" to be spoken to some discouraged fellow-traveller. How many a time in the way to Zion does the Lord teach His children the lessons of "the valley" that lies "between the hills!" They have set before themselves a path, in which each step is a conscious advance, and joyously and successfully, year after year, their work prospers. "Excelsior" is their cry—higher still and higher! Summit after summit rises before them, and they want to plant their foot upon the most glorious of all.

He, who has called them to glory, honour, and immortality, loves to see them "forgetting the things that are behind, and reaching forth unto those that are before," and, as they keep their eye upon the Home beyond, which seems but a few paces higher up, He Himself allows the happy realisation of faith and hope in His own words: "Ye *are come unto* the City of the living GOD, the heavenly Jerusalem."

But a new phase of spiritual experience surprises them. Their work is hindered, and apparently their progress too—the enemy comes in with desolating influences—evil reports or adverse circumstances arise

—trials of health, or spirit, or family, combine to depress the ardent heart; and, instead of gaining, they seem to be losing ground. They are going down into the valley, and for a while the sun-lit peaks are hidden from their sight.

The first intimation of this is always a critical moment for the pilgrim, and if not keeping close to his Guide, he is apt to lose heart. But it need not be so. In order that it may be a happy place, we cannot err in saying to such an one:—

1st. *Give God your confidence in "the valley,"* and let the enemy know at once, as he plies you with his cruel suggestion, "GOD hath forsaken thee," that you trust, and are not afraid. "In His hand are the deep places of the earth," and as in old time He rebuked the foe for His people's sake, so will He again. "Thus saith the Lord, Because the Syrians have said, *The Lord is God of the hills, but He is not God of the valleys,* therefore will I deliver all this great multitude into thine hand, and ye shall know that I am the Lord" (1 Kings xx. 28)—*i.e.*, "the Lord" *towards My people* in all circumstances. So, then, let us, dear friends, look up to our faithful Leader when He calls us to go down into the valley of bereavement, or sickness, or disappointment, or failure, saying: "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: *for* THOU *art with me;* Thy rod and Thy staff they comfort me" (Ps. xxiii. 4).

"I know not the way I am going,
But well do I know my Guide,

With a child-like trust I give my hand
To the mighty Friend at my side."

2d. *Accept the lessons of "the valley."* There are precious and salutary teachings to be learned only in the low place, and GOD brings His saints there, that, through receiving these teachings, they may glorify Him. There are "*fruits* of the valley" (Cant. vi. 11), which Jesus loves to see, that do not so well flourish on the hill. In a path of unbroken prosperity and unhindered success, there is a tendency to become uplifted, but the stillness of "the valley" is good for "the hidden man of the heart." There, in the holy rest of communion, in the subjugation of the will, and in a self-knowledge gained in converse with GOD, the soul walks softly, and the result is a brightening of the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in His sight of great price.* And it is a good place for getting "grounded in love" and for hearing distinctly "the still small voice."

3d. Never forget that "*the valley*" *is in the way to the hill.* Though it seems to be a turning aside and almost a retrograding, hold fast to the thought that valley and hill are both alike in the King's highway, and that under Divine guidance you are, *in going down*, making as much real progress towards the end as when you were, to your own consciousness, mounting up. Do not try to make a bridge of your own, which would bring you "by a short cut" across the valley, but believe

* See Bunyan's beautiful description of "The Valley of Humiliation."

that your steps are ordered by the Lord, and walk on steadfastly and patiently in the way of His choosing. Take comfort, too, from what is said of the Lord Jesus: "Now that He ascended, what is it but *that He also descended first* into the lower parts of the earth?" (Eph. iv. 9.) Oh how deep was the valley of which our Great Forerunner had experience, which "it behoved Him" for our sakes to traverse, before, in resurrection glory, He could mount up far above all heavens, that He might fill all things! Looking at Him, who became obedient unto death, you will be made willing to accept the Lord's will for yourself, and passing in this spirit through the depressing circumstances that may be appointed you, your valley will become "a door of hope"—a place of shelter—a well-spring of refreshment—and you shall go from strength to strength, till in Zion you appear before GOD.

It may be that the next turn of the road is nearer than you think, but of one thing we are very sure, that not far distant from any who confess themselves "strangers and pilgrims upon earth" is the City of their inheritance. It was given to the beloved Apostle in vision to look within the gates; and he tells us that he saw a throne there, that One sat upon the throne, whom we recognise as the ascended Lord and Master, with whom we hope to reign, and that "*there was a rainbow round about the throne*, in sight like unto an emerald."

Let, then, all the companions of Jesus be of good cheer. The valleys into which He leads them are "between the hills" of grace and glory. Not one step

en with Him in the Past will be lost, not one work gotten, not one height scaled in vain, and from every r place they may again journey onward and upward, h the rainbow of covenant love in view, and better pared by the humbling lessons in the way for the oyment of all that awaits them on the blessed mit at the end.

A FRAGMENT.

"*Hold Thou me up, and I shall be safe.*"—Ps. cxix. 117.

THE hill was steep, but cheered along the way
By converse sweet, I mounted on and thought
That so it might be till the height was reached;
But suddenly a narrow winding path
Appeared, and then the Master said, "My child,
Here thou wilt safest walk with Me, *alone.*"
I trembled, yet my heart's deep trust replied,
"So be it, Lord." He took my feeble hand
In His, accepting thus my will to yield Him
All, and to find all in Him. . . .
. One long, dark moment,
And no friend I saw, save JESUS only.
Then I was faint awhile, and feared to climb;
But oh! so tenderly He led me on
And up, and spoke to me such words of cheer,
Such secrets whispered of His wondrous love,
That soon I told Him all my grief and fear,
And leaned on His strong arm confidingly.
Ah! then I found my footsteps quickened,
And light ineffable the rugged way
Illum'd—such light as only can be seen
In close companionship with GOD. . . .

A *little* while, and we shall meet again,

The loved and lost; but in the rapt'rous joy
Of greetings such as here we cannot know,
And happy song and heavenly embrace,
And tender recollections rushing back
Of pilgrim life,—methinks one memory
More dear and sacred than the rest shall rise—
And we, who gather in the golden streets,
Shall oft be stirred to speak with grateful love
Of that dark day when Jesus bid us climb
Some narrow steep, leaning on Him *alone*.

III.

In the Dark.

A LESSON FROM A DISAPPOINTMENT.

"He knoweth what is in the darkness, and the light dwelleth with Him."

"IN THE DARK."

A LESSON FROM A DISAPPOINTMENT.

My subject seems at first sight a gloomy one, but it has more light than appears on the surface. Let me relate the very simple incident that suggested it.

I was not a little disappointed in the flowering of some hyacinths which were placed in glasses last season. They were bought of a good gardener, appeared to be good roots, and had very good names, but they almost expended themselves in leaf, and the bloom was quite a failure. One formed a set of buds which never opened, the blossoms of the other were puny and insignificant, and not at all what they were intended to be.

When the time came for buying hyacinths again, I complained of this unsatisfactory result. With an idea that the imperfection of my flowers might be traceable to some error in treatment on my own part, which might be avoided in the future, I looked to the gardener as a professional adviser in this particular case to help me.

He shook his head at first, and said he could not account for it—it was so strange that the bulbs should grow as I described them; but after a minute he suggested, "Perhaps you did not keep them long enough

in the dark." "In the dark!" I exclaimed; "I did not put them at all in the dark. Ought I to have done so?"

"Yes," was his reply; "if you wish for good flowers, you should keep them in the dark for at least ten weeks, and in a cool place, and then if you bring them out, two days of warmth and light will do more for them than all the weeks before would have done, and you will not then, I think, be disappointed in your bulbs."

It was an explanation for which I was unprepared, the value of which had to be tested, but a lesson seemed wrapped up in it which at once spoke to my heart.

Are we not as plants under GOD'S hand, to bloom by and by in His presence, that need, like these hyacinths, to be placed awhile in the dark? Let me illustrate what I mean: Is there not often a weak and unsatisfactory growth in plants of GOD'S planting caused by too much exposure to the light, by living too much in the broad glare of publicity, which makes it needful for the Heavenly Gardener to lay His hand upon them, take them aside and shut them into a quiet chamber where the too exuberant forth-springing of the present will be checked, and the life at the heart strengthened for a better development by and by? The familiar words of the hymn express it—

> "Immortal light and joys unknown
> Are for the saints *in darkness* sown;
> There heavenly seeds shall spring and rise
> And the bright harvest glad our eyes."

This is the explanation of GOD'S visitations of sickness and sorrow. He is for a time putting His plants into "the dark," in order that there may be less leaf and more flower. It is in "the dark," when human influences are shut away, that Divine communications are most precious. It is in "the dark" that the realities of life are best understood.

Often there is much which, to the outward eye, looks promising—"vines and fig-trees" that GOD must away with (Hosea ii. 12),—and when He is dealing with a soul that has been bringing forth fruit to itself, He will not leave that soul blighted, but will "allure her into the wilderness, and give her her vineyards *from thence.*" Out of darkness He knows how to bring light.

What is the message such thoughts speak? Let none be discouraged when thus visited by the Lord. We love the sunshine, and fear as we enter into the cloud; but "His faithfulness reacheth unto the clouds," and all His children may be sure that their Father is working for them marvellously in the dark.

It will not strain the subject if we allow it to bear another application. There is a tendency in the present day to thrust young disciples quickly forward into prominent service, instead of allowing them a little time to grow and mature in the shade. We know that labourers are few, and every new voice and hand seems wanted; but for their own sakes, and for the sake of the quality of the work hereafter to be done, it would surely be better to advise a modest, quiet beginning.

The Lord is not in a hurry as we are. He could afford to allow Moses forty years in Midian after his decision was made to cast in his lot with the people he should deliver—to give John the Baptist a long time of preparation in the wilderness before he was shown to Israel as the Preparer of the way of the Lord; and above all, even though each year was a costly sacrifice beyond our powers to conceive, eighteen of those years of the life of Jesus upon earth were spent in seclusion after He had announced to His wondering parents His errand to be about His Father's business.

It is not that we would shut the lips of the child new born into the family; but it seems most fitting that the first sphere of confession should be at home, and that the early days of Christian life should be rather characterised by *learning* than teaching.

We all need to beware of living too much before men, and too little with GOD; and it is in tender love, to preserve them to flourish in glory and beauty in His kingdom yet to come, that He checks many a foolish and hasty tendency to development that is not of Him, blights many a purpose, and arrests many a work by calling aside into "the dark" those whom He has purchased to Himself at such a costly price.

The Lord knows how to make darkness His secret place—the place of special communion and manifestation, and to give to the soul under His training the "treasures" which He discovereth there. "The darkness," blessed thought! "darkeneth not from Him."

No! rather His own special light irradiates the sanctuary from which earthly light is excluded, even as the Shekinah shone within the Holy of Holies, and revealed its precious things.

Let the thought speak also comfort to the bereaved. In a very real sense it has pleased the Lord to put "in the dark," as far as the sight of our eyes is concerned, those whom we loved to gaze upon. They sleep in Jesus, and though we rejoice in the happy assurance of their being at rest, the bitter trial is that they are entirely shut away from our communication and converse. What would we not give for one little hour of intercourse again; but vainly do we strive to pierce through the cloud that hides from us the invisible.

Dear mourner, be patient, and interpret thus even for them the waiting time. They are being prepared by the Lord, with whom they are present, for their manifestation by and by. We cannot think that a single moment is valueless that is spent with Him. Longfellow has beautifully expressed what he feels may be the anticipation of the Christian mother who has been called to part with her little one in tender years:—

"Not as a child shall we again behold her;
For when, with rapture wild,
In our embraces we again enfold her,
She will not be a child,—
But a fair maiden in her Father's mansion,
Clothed with celestial grace;
And, beautiful *with all the soul's expansion*,
Shall we behold her face."

And there is not a torn heart in the family of GOD who has yielded up its treasure to His safe keeping, but may take the wonderful comfort from the words which express more than all beside what we long for—"Them that sleep in Jesus will GOD bring with Him." How delightful it will be then to see, in full bloom and unsullied beauty, those who were precious to us, and who grew beside us in the wilderness! They are hidden away now, not from our eyes alone, but from the scorching glare of the desert, from the dust of the way which spoils the freshness of the leaves it settles on, and from the wind which blights and distresses them; but the day of manifestation draweth nigh, when each one that has grown up on earth as "a tender plant out of a dry ground," springing from Him of whom this was emphatically said, and nourished by His life, shall be brought into view amongst the trees of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, that He may be glorified.

"GOD is light, and in Him is no darkness at all," and whatever may be the apparent darkness that encompasses some of His ways, we shall learn in that day that every one of them leads straight on and straight up to the glory. It was so when He dealt with the Lord Jesus as our Surety. Coming to fulfil all righteousness and to make an end of sin, He had to be brought into "a place of darkness," but did He not emerge from it into a sphere of marvellous light? It shall be with the disciple as with the Master—"if we have been planted together in the likeness of His death,

ve shall be also in the likeness of His resurrection." The only darkness we need fear is that which we make for ourselves, by walking in forbidden ways;—the shadows into which GOD brings us are sacred and sanctifying, and always issue in light. Yea! He Himself is within every shadow with His own Presence, so that even when the soul that trusts Him cannot see, it can joyfully sing, "I will fear no evil, for THOU art with me."

May this be the happy experience of every dear reader, who in any sense is called aside into "the dark"—until the day break and the shadows flee away!

THE DYING BABY'S FINGER.

THE mother's heart was sorely rent,
As on her babe she gazed;
The little life was nearly spent,
The bright blue eyes were glazed.
'Twas but a tender little one,
It *knew*, but could not speak;
And to a mother's love alone
Its meaning it could make.

But, as with scalding tears of grief
That mother watched her child,
Strangely and sweetly came relief—
The babe looked up and smiled,
And with its tiny finger-top
Just pointed to the sky—
Then closed the weary eyelids up,
And laid it down to die.

GOD's ways are wonderful, we know,
And manifold His grace;
In darkest seasons He can show
The shining of His face.
He speaks *by silence*—gives *by loss*,
And fills the eye with tears
To read the mystery of the Cross
Wherein His love appears.

And when the darkened curtain fell
Upon that cradle bed,
He wakened up a tender spell
That gently upward led.
Above the death, the gloom, the woe,
On that sad hour impressed,
The Spirit taught her how to go
To Jesus Christ for rest.

The baby's finger led the way—
'Twas GOD's own gracious plan;
Beside her dying child that day
The mother's life began!*

* The striking story of the conversion of a mother by means of her dying babe, which suggested these lines, was told by the Rev. W. Pennefather. It not only shows that even a very tiny life may not have been lived or cared for in vain, but also how, out of darkness, God can bring light. He mentioned it with his own peculiar pathos in a sermon, the text of which was the latter clause of Eph. ii. 10, "The manifold wisdom of God." In illustration of this *manifold* wisdom, as shown in the various ways in which He draws His children to Himself, the simple incident referred to was related.

IV.

Ready to Save.

A LESSON LEARNED AT A COASTGUARD STATION.

"Instant in season, out of season."

"READY TO SAVE."

A LESSON LEARNED AT A COASTGUARD STATION.

On a stormy March day, just after the sad time when the "Eurydice," nearing home, foundered in the deep, I was permitted from a quiet window to enjoy an extensive view of a portion of the south-west coast of Cornwall, to which I had been led for a few weeks' refreshment and change. My journey seaward had fallen upon what seemed the coldest day in the year, and as I looked out upon the scene before me it had a very mingled aspect, in which *winter* rather predominated than spring.

The gorse on the heath and the primrose hedge were alike fringed with snow, the fishers' cottages had snow on their roofs, and the new lambs shivered in the first severe blast they had felt, appearing with an air of helpless surprise, as the wind blew up the wool on their mothers' backs till it almost stood erect! Now and then a smile of beautiful sunshine revealed sandy stretches, and coves and points, where the white waves were rolling and tossing, and throwing their airy cascades at various heights over the rocks, and anon pitiless hail showers hid everything from view. Cloud shadows swept across the agitated surface of the bay,

and then a gathering deep gloom settled down, imparting to the sea, on which the sunbeams had sparkled, an inky hue. Sudden squalls followed, which threatened terrible disaster to the unreefed sail exposed to them. The voice of the Lord was upon the waters.

It was comforting in intervals of light to see the ships in the distance pass safely on from point to point —and no casualty, that I am aware of, was reported on that day; but in view of the troubled sky and sea, there was rest in the thought that the means of rescue for any imperilled ones who should be within its reach, were not only devised, but near at hand, for immediate use.

Just round the corner—a grand, bold point, off which stands a rock, which in shape and position became familiar as a miniature St. Michael's Mount—you come upon a sheltered bend in the hill, where a row of cottages, appropriated to the men on duty, marks the Coastguard station for this part of the county. It is pleasantly situated. The gorse, with its golden blossom, covering a great portion of the ground, looks gay in fine weather, and on the green patches above and below sheep and lambs feed and rest. Such a pretty pair I saw basking in the sunshine, for not till a sunny day succeeded the stormy one did I venture out on the moor. Farther on there were other indications of young life—that life which always brings thoughts of gladness to the mind—children on the sands, chickens gathering around the mother-hen. The beach is composed of white and grey stones and pebbles; and boats in good trim are on the banks,

beside which a clear, rippling stream—that "necessity for a home"—flows abundantly from the valley close by.

At the end of the cottages stands the covered building I was particularly desirous to visit. Over the door the large letters "V.R." tell you that in this isolated place there are not wanting tokens of our Queen's gracious sway, and within is the simple yet wonderful contrivance for saving the shipwrecked, known as the rocket apparatus. I was allowed to enter, and the men in charge readily and courteously explained its design and working.

In a vehicle, somewhat resembling an ordinary cart, ready to be drawn out at a moment's notice, is stored everything that experience can suggest for its mission of rescue. By means of a powder charge (would that all powder had such beneficent aim!) it can throw out ropes of various size to a great distance to reach the sinking seaman, or the sinking boat or vessel; and besides this, it is provided with life-belts, anchor, spade, and means for kindling in the darkness the beautiful, piercing limelight. There are boards, on which directions are printed in French and English, attached to the ropes sent out to ships in danger, by help of which, if able to read them, more intelligent efforts may be made by the captain and crew co-operating with their deliverers.

There was no signs of its being *needed* on the day I saw it, for the storm having passed away all was calm and bright; but there it was in perfect order, with all its appliances carefully adjusted, as if wanted at that

very moment, forcibly, though silently, uttering the words—"READY TO SAVE!"

Three very precious things are said about salvation in connection with our GOD.

1st. He is *able*, yes, *mighty* to save (Heb. vii. 25; Isa. lxiii. 1).

2d. He is *willing* to save (1 Tim. ii. 4; 2 Pet. iii. 9).

But beyond this, sweetest of all, we are told—

3d. He is—READY—to save (Isa. xxxviii. 20; Matt. xxii. 4).

Ability may exist without willingness, and even when there is will as well as power, certain conditions have to be fulfilled, especially in Divinely-ordered things—and certain channels appointed through which the Divinely-prepared succour may reach the human need. How great was the demand upon the resources of GOD—we say it reverently—in preparing salvation for lost sinners! Let us never lose sight of the emphasised word, "GOD SO loved the world that He gave His only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." Or of that touching appeal in Romans viii., "He that SPARED NOT His own Son," &c., and as we meditate, get deeper views of the *costliness* of what is now so freely offered to ruined man, as well as its completeness. For Jehovah left nothing undone in the matter of salvation that man's deepest need should require, and the words of the Lord Jesus, spoken in parable, "*Come, for all things are now ready*," are now more clearly verified to us who have heard that later utterance on Calvary's

Cross—"IT IS FINISHED"—and known something, through the Holy Ghost, of the power of the risen and ascended Saviour.

But to ourselves, as fellow-workers with GOD, how does the lesson apply? It is very important that we also learn practically to be "*ready* to save." How much so-called Christian philanthropy is wasted through want of simple appliances at hand for the immediate relief of human need and suffering, and then we *pity*, but we do not help, till what should be active benevolence degenerates into mere sensitiveness—the useless romance of charity! Nothing is more weakening to character than a right impulse or a kindly feeling which is not translated into action, when the opportunity to act is given.

The making a garment for one shivering child is of far more value than a thousand laments over the general mass of poverty; the single word of counsel to a neighbour near, or of sympathy "fitted to the lips," is better than a hundred imaginary conversations with troubled souls afar off, and what we want is to be "ready" when the calls for such help come as it is in our power to render.

You mourn, perhaps (who does not?), over the many opportunities missed of doing good; may not the failure be traced not so much to unwillingness to be of service, or to inability, as to *unreadiness?* A soul crosses your path, but the word is not ready, the tract or book is not at hand, the help sought is not easily forthcoming; the real truth is, you yourself are not

"ready," and that soul in consequence slips away from your influence none the better for it.

The same failure is to be deplored in many a professedly Christian home. Amidst much that is pleasing and promising in its arrangements for comfort and instruction and daily life, one thing is wanting. There is no careful adjustment of wise and holy means for the highest good of the souls beneath its roof, nothing that would illustrate the words—"*ready* TO SAVE." And the children feel it—the servants, the friends; they go out and come in, and remain unreached for Eternity.

People read of "perishing millions" in lands far away, and their hearts are touched by the details of their Christless state; they would like to help to save them, but it is too often with them "to-morrow" instead of "to-day;" and putting off the practical outcome of the thought of help, and going to sleep over it, the impression weakens till it is altogether forgotten. They *think* they are willing, but alas! they are not "ready," and no rescued souls in the vast mission-field will be their crown of rejoicing in the day of the Lord Jesus.

To be "*ready* to save" implies and requires forethought, industry, and the wise application of every faculty and means that GOD has bestowed; and to ensure this, there must first be a heart in close fellowship with GOD Himself—a heart undivided in its allegiance and its love, and single in its purpose. It must have judged that "He died for all, that they which live should *not henceforth live unto themselves*, but

UNTO HIM who died for them and rose again," and have gladly yielded all to the Master's use in the one great service of love.

Money, if we have it, will then be so disposed that something will always be reserved for the needy in soul as well as body; time—that there will be moments to spare for kindly offices to others; talents—that our heads may devise and our hands execute what will become at least *adjuncts*, if not direct agents, in the work of rescue. We need not let a single GOD-given power lie idle if only we have this true-hearted desire to labour with Him in saving the lost; and it is indeed only by the sanctified use of every GOD-given power entrusted to us that the desire can become effectual. Even our lessons of preparation will be learned from the Great Saviour, who will also, by His Spirit, teach us how to apply them, and the principle on which we act will be, "I *made haste*, and *delayed not* to keep Thy commandments."

Dear friends, you will yourselves enlarge upon this simple lesson. As I look back to the picturesque but isolated station on the hill, with its skilfully-arranged means of rescue,—"ready" when the sun shines, "ready" when the storm lowers, "ready" when the fog gathers—always "ready," such passages as these come to mind for application in individual daily life: "A vessel unto honour, sanctified, and meet for the Master's use, and *prepared unto* every good work" (2 Tim. ii. 21); "All Scripture is given . . . that the man of GOD may be perfect, *thoroughly furnished*

unto all good works" (Chap. iii. 16, 17); "Charge them that are rich to be *ready* to distribute" (1 Tim. vi. 17, 18); "Put them in mind *to be ready* to every good work" (Titus iii. 1). And St. Paul's charges to his Corinthian converts are also remembered (see 2 Cor. viii.), in which he so strongly exhorts them to make a ready "performance," agree with "a readiness to will" (verse 11) "*out of that which ye have,*" and linking together the glory of the Lord and the declaration of their "ready mind" (verse 19), moves them, in chap. ix., by all that he desires for them, and all they would desire for themselves, to be "beforehand" with their bounty, and not allow the brethren to find them "unprepared." (Verses 3 to 5.)

I like to think of our Churches, our Mission Rooms, our Homes of Refuge, our Institutes, our Night-schools, our Dispensaries and Hospitals, our Coffee Shops, and kindred agencies—not in one place alone, but wherever established—with their open doors to the wandering, the tempted, the perishing, as inscribed with these precious words, "READY TO SAVE." We must be patient, if for a time some of them seem to be "ready" in vain—the saving of one soul will make amends for long seasons of waiting,—but sad indeed would it prove if, through weariness or discouragement, we ceased to wait and watch, and allowed any to drift hopelessly by because the friendly succour that might have been available was at the needed moment withdrawn.

Christians should have their ropes at all times in working order. Surely, if in the service of an earthly

monarch and under her initials, men are never off duty, but watching by night as well as day; we, who serve and bear the name of the King of kings—who have proved His timely help a thousand times in our own sore need—should count it an honour, and accept it as a holy responsibility, after His example and under His direction to be always "READY TO SAVE!"

RENEWED CONSECRATION.

LORD JESUS, at Thy piercéd feet we fall,
Thou who, to ransom us from Satan's thrall,
Didst give Thy life, Thy precious blood, Thy all,
We yield ourselves to Thee!

Sweet was the welcome of Thy loving voice,
Which called to rest, and made our hearts rejoice;
Thy blessings freely given beyond all price,
When first we came to Thee.

And, ever since, unwearied love we trace,
Unchanging 'midst all change of time and place—
Treasures of mercy, rich abounding grace,
Our heritage in Thee!

But we have faithless proved, ungrateful, cold;
Our love's return too scantly we have doled—
So little rendered for such love untold,—
So much received from Thee!

Oh, by the strongest, sweetest, holiest claim—
Thy life of sacrifice, Thy death of shame—
By all the power of Thy mighty name,
Bind Thou our hearts to Thee!

Take *all;* our purposes and thoughts command;
Hold memory and imagination in Thy hand;
And give us grace in faithfulness to stand
As "witnesses" for Thee!

V.

The Covering of Love.

A LESSON LEARNED AMONG THE MOSSES.

"Charity never faileth."

THE COVERING OF LOVE.

A LESSON LEARNED AMONG THE MOSSES.

THE time of the singing of birds had come, and again I went into the country to inhale the breath of Spring, and to see some of the early blossoms. But though far on in April, Winter lingered as if unwilling to relax its icy hold upon the land, and the warmth of the fire-side was as welcome as ever.

In the railway carriage, the one thought of the travellers seemed to be to keep out the cold wind by closing the windows, and to protect themselves as much as possible under their wraps. They looked out upon a sky that for several hours was wholly overcast, and yet, now and then, a patch of intense blue would burst through the veil, as if promising better things, but only to be clouded over again with a deeper gloom.

I had but a few days to spare, and in those days there was, with one exception, scarcely any sunshine; so that though surrounded by scenes of unwonted loveliness, there was little opportunity of enjoying them, except in imagination. The great charm of the place where I rested was its extensive woods; but, though the buds on the trees were ready to burst, the chill blast kept them closed, and the branches were still

bare of that new robe of living green which is their glory in Spring. Yet my longing for some sweet picture was not to be unanswered; how could it be, even in the darkest day, among the manifold works of GOD!

Ascending one of the wooded slopes, at the foot of which rolls the sea, I was arrested by the extreme beauty and variety of the mosses, which were thickly clustered on many a little knoll rising above the surface of dead leaves, with which the ground was still strewn, and here and there gemmed by a bunch of primroses. Perhaps, as is often the case, because the buddings above me were backward, my eyes were more attracted by these humble little springings at my feet. At all events, I soon forgot the wintry feeling in a closer examination of them, and, still ascending, paused with silent admiration before what appeared to me a real *chef d'œuvre* of moss work.

A stump of what had once been a large forest tree, was all that remained to mark where it for years spread its branches in luxuriance and strength. Many a deep cavity was worn in it by "Time's effacing finger," and had it been left in its bareness to the slow but sure process of decay, it would have been only a miserable-looking relic of the past. But it was not so. It is impossible for me to describe how sweetly and brightly the mosses, interleaved with ivy and fern, grew over that crumbling stock, making every cavity beautiful with a covering of freshest green, and hiding from sight all the decay and deformity of the old bit

of tree, while on the top the delicate leaves and flowers of the wood sorrel, like a crown of purity, blossomed with sweetest grace.

Those who have opportunity themselves to observe the mosses, and to study them with instructed eye, will fill up the details of my sketch far better than I am able to attempt. The exquisite form of their tiny leaves—their exuberance, their variety, their freshness—all speak of Creative goodness and bounty; and it is often in such *little* things that we see most vividly the greatness and boundless resources of our GOD.

But the lesson with which "the mosses" were charged on this April day, came closer home, for they seemed to illustrate one of those royal proverbs, which have been handed down through the ages to us, as children of the King, to be acted out in everyday life; an old word of wisdom (Prov. x. 12), made new by its repetition in slightly altered form, in St. Peter's First Epistle—"LOVE COVERETH ALL SIN."

Like the mossy garment thrown over the unsightliness of the decaying bark and maimed tree, so should Christian love be — hiding away the infirmities, and offences, and unattractiveness it meets with in those with whom it comes in contact, and drinking in the dew and rain from Heaven, retaining ever its living freshness despite of all. There are cases, we know, in which it is necessary that public notice be taken of sins, and to such these words do not refer, except in the pitying spirit that even then they inculcate; but in the sense in which we are *personally* affected by

the transgressions or failings of others, they always apply.

This love—the true love learned in fellowship with Jesus—is not wanting in faithfulness, but it remembers the Master's word, "If thy brother trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault *between him and thee alone*," and doing this, it often gains the brother and covers his fault.

Too frequently when, after variance, friends have become reconciled, the causes of offence and the circumstances of reconciliation are freely spoken of in the presence of a third or fourth party, till the very recital makes close accord between the separated ones almost impossible. Love carries no tales, whispers no reproaches, but keeps its secret to itself, and never willingly spreads the story of a misunderstanding, or a wrong, or a slight.

The "covering" action of Love reaches beyond forgiveness, though it includes it. Forgiveness, in its human exercise, often fails to concern itself about the future of the forgiven one, and is content when it has healed a wound to let the scar remain in sight. Love hides away the scar as well as heals the wound.

In the love that "covers," we see a strong element both of humility and hope. Of *humility*—in that it fulfils the lowliest ministry on behalf of a brother or sister who has been "overtaken in a fault"—able, in judgment, to exchange places with offending ones, it knows how to come close beside them in sympathy and self-distrust; and of *hope*—in that it ever puts the best construction upon motives and conduct, and sees

the possibilities of a brighter Future wherever it looks upon a clouded Present. How tenderly and courageously will the Love that "beareth all things" and "hopeth all things," deal with "them that are out of the way," till it win them to seek for themselves the power of restoring grace!

Let us, for a moment, look at its Divine pattern, as we see it traced in the life of Jesus. Not only, in His mission of grace and mercy, had He to endure "the contradiction of sinners against Himself," but from those few chosen ones whom He ordained to be with Him that He might send them forth to preach, how much had He to bear! Faithless, perverse, and often unreasonable; full of childish mistakes and apprehensions; He told them the same things over and over again, and they understood not. The three, called to watch with Him in His agony, slept while He wrestled; and when His cruel enemies came to lay hold of Him, and carry Him to prison and to death, all His disciples, at the first panic, "forsook Him and fled."

Was there *forgiveness* alone after this from Him who, having loved His own that were with Him in the world, loved them unto the end? The closing chapters of the Gospels show us that, out of the abundance of His heart, the Lord Jesus had unspeakably more to give, and the "covering" aspect of *His* love is strikingly brought out.

For example: as they sat together at the Last Supper, after the many manifestations the disciples had given their Master of human frailty and folly, how

generously, how wondrously, did that Master hide all their faults under the one kind thing He could approvingly say, as He saw them still clustering around Him, "Ye are they which *have continued with Me* in My temptations." And, pleading on their behalf for His Father's abiding care when He should leave them behind Him in the world, it was just the same: "They," He said, "*have kept* My word." Only this, and not a single syllable of reproach or recrimination, fell from the Saviour's lips.

See, again, how it was after the Resurrection. There was still nothing but patient, tender dealing with erring ones, whether we take the case of Peter or Thomas, or the hesitating two at Emmaus, or the gathered company who would scarcely believe, after all the infallible proofs, that He was risen from the dead. Over one and all the Lord spread His mantle of blessing and peace.

How is it now that He has entered into the holy place? Does His love still cover sins? One word will suffice—"*If any man sin* we have AN ADVOCATE with the Father, Jesus Christ the Righteous." All sins, the multitude of sins brought to the fountain of His precious blood, are so covered as to be seen no more. And we may repeat to our hearts the cheering truth, that it is not forgiveness alone which the advocacy of Jesus ensures, but that He has provided for all who come to Him the beautiful garments of salvation and the robe of righteousness, with which He clothes the deformed and defiled soul, so that even the Eye of spotless purity beholds no iniquity in Jacob, nor perverseness in Israel.

The picture of the mossy tree but faintly represents the work done for the happy recipients of this all-covering Love, for there is one thing about it which goes far beyond both the type and any human illustration. Beneath the bright and springing moss growth, there was no arrest of hidden decay. Life could only flourish there on the surface, and the aged trunk must still slowly crumble into ruin. It can never be so under the covering of redeeming love, for this quickens whatever it embraces, and transforms that which it enwraps. The righteousness of Christ and the Spirit of Christ always go together, and the soul that wears the wedding-garment is made "all glorious within."

If we desire to be successful in our work, and to shine brightly for GOD, let us seek in our own experience to know more of the blessed reality of the Love that is perfect, which the Lord "hath towards us," and in our practice to illustrate more of the love that is growing every day out of that Divine Love, and on this account becoming better able to "cover the multitude of sins." It is only *fervent*, God-like charity that can do this, whether those "sins" be met with in our homes, amongst the nearest and dearest—in the circle of Christian friends—or in association with the outer world, in efforts of service, or ordinary social intercourse. Such living, glowing love is not of human origin; it is "the fruit of the Spirit;" it is the walking "in love, *as Christ hath loved us*," and under its mantle there will be wonderful transformations. The harsh will become gentle; the unsightly, beautiful; the despairing, hopeful; and the stubborn, tractable; joy will

abound, and grace will triumph, to the praise of glory of GOD. The soul that dwells in love wil able to say, "Let my Beloved come into his gar and eat his pleasant fruits."

"Gracious Spirit, Holy Ghost,
Taught by Thee, we covet most
Of Thy gifts at Pentecost
Holy, heavenly Love.

"Love is kind and suffers long;
Love is meek and thinks no wrong;
Love than death itself more strong,
Therefore give us Love."

VI.

Motherless.

A SKETCH FROM COUNTRY LIFE.

"Take this child and nurse it for me."

MOTHERLESS.

A SKETCH FROM COUNTRY LIFE.

' was over and gone, the flowers appeared
rth, and the pastures were everywhere
h flocks. There seemed no prettier sight
nshine of early spring than the happy,
mbols of the lambkins as they frolicked
ir dams or exchanged sallies with one
metimes looking out over the budding
n the world beyond, sometimes grouping
young friends in their native field, but
ning back, when a stranger appeared, with
accuracy and directness to their own parti-
er, and facing fear and danger by her side.
herhood, as illustrated in the lower creatures,
he most striking and wonderful of GOD'S
d it was very sweetly pictured, as these
, fleecy things, with a gentle bleat, trotted
faithful protectors, and were received with
ection and welcome of which sheep are
Not far from this well-guarded pasture,
different scene. The field, which is before
eye, lay near the sea, and beyond it a wild
land extended for some distance along the

coast. Over this open country, as well as in the enclosed parts, the flocks were scattered, and it added much to the beauty of the sterner features of the landscape that it was dotted over, not only with fresh flowers but with young lambs, which seemed as well taken care of here as elsewhere by matronly sheep.

Yet, as one looked at the overhanging cliffs, the dangerous slopes, and the scanty herbage, and felt the wind sweep across the hill, thought would instinctively turn to the better lot of the dwellers within the shelter of the hedges, and wonder how the poor flocks could fare in dark and stormy days, and amidst the perils of their beautiful but barren sea-bound moor.

My attention, when walking over it, was drawn to two little lambs apart from the others, which kept close together. They were quite tiny ones, but I watched in vain for the mother-sheep to come and claim them. They climbed up the steep bank by themselves to nibble the fresh grass, and when they were looked at did not run away, for there seemed no one to run to.

On returning to the cottage where I was staying, I asked their history, and learned that in an evil hour the too venturesome dam, probably decoyed by the patches of green which grow upon dangerous ledges of rock, had lost its footing, slipped over the precipice, and found its death somewhere in the deep chasm below, leaving these two lambs, almost in their infancy, *motherless.*

Ever after, the little pair awakened a great interest whenever they came in sight, which was pretty often.

It was wonderful how they struggled up towards sheep-life by themselves, for the rest of the flock rather spurned them, and would not allow them to come into close association with its ordinarily trained members; perhaps dreading the innovation of such early independence!

And so they became more attached to, and more satisfied with, one another, and by a sort of instinct in their efforts to provide for themselves without help from their fellows, ventured to presume a little upon the compassion of earth's ruling race. They were rewarded by the clemency of the neighbouring farmers who, touched by their helpless condition, allowed them unrebuked to wander into their fields and nibble such tender springings as none but "motherless lambs" would have been permitted to touch.

Dear friends, I have not brought before you this sketch from country life for its own sake. As I looked on these desolate little creatures and heard their plaintive bleat, it seemed to be but an echo of the far sadder cry going up through the length and breadth of the land from babes of the human family — "MOTHERLESS!"—and I longed to use it as a means of pleading with you for such. A sketch given by Dr. Barnardo in his new periodical, "Night and Day," so verifies this most touching application of the picture that I would reproduce its main facts:—

A poor young mother, betrayed, ill-treated, and finally deserted, was only twenty-two, when the verdict of the jury over her corpse was, "Committed suicide whilst in a state of temporary

insanity." All that was known of the sad particulars is given in few words.

She bestows a hurried and burning kiss upon her little ones (there were two of them, sleeping in the bed, placidly unconscious of the consuming fever concentrated in that last sad embrace), and then, calmly and quietly—so far, at least, as externals go—she puts on her thin and well-worn shawl, and telling her landlady that she feels poorly, and will go out for a walk, forth she steps, never again, living or dead, to re-enter that door!

Hurriedly she walks to and fro on the canal bridge; a policeman notices her, and bids her "Good night." She replies so calmly, that his suspicions, if he entertained any, are removed, and he resumes his beat.

Once more she is alone, walking to and fro; perhaps debating in her agonising thoughts the probable results of her act. She takes one step forward, then hesitates. But why? Is it that the future in the unseen world looks so black and awful? Or do the faces of her babes come pleadingly before her? We know not, except that it was clear from the testimony of two witnesses, given at the inquest, that she did thus pace to and fro for nearly an hour before she took the final and irrevocable step to which her dark despair so madly prompted. Perhaps to her diseased imagination the unseen life of which she knew so little could not seem worse, more hard, more cruel, or more awful, than that world in which she had already reaped so many sorrows and experienced such heart-crushing woe. And there was no one near to tell her of Him whose unfailing mercy, gentle words, loving invitations, and precious blood, are more than balm of Gilead to such a wounded spirit.

A hurried look all round—it may be a bitter wail—one fatal leap, and then, amid the black and glistening waters of the fœtid stream, to mortal eyes she sank for ever.

.

And what became of the motherless sleepers? At first the "workhouse" took the children, and as it was a "model" workhouse, all such things were done properly, with due regard to red tape and precedent; so the two wee ones were *ticketed*, and *labelled*, and cropped, and uniformed, and numbered, and finally lost

sight of amid the host of other "paupers" in the "house," until a few years afterwards, a poor aunt turned up and offered to remove them, when they were gladly surrendered to her care. She tried hard, with her precarious means of subsistence, to keep them with her; but she, too, had soon to give up the struggle, or her own little ones would want. Must it be the Union again? So it seemed, Dr. Barnardo writes, till, in response to her application, "we consented to *take the boy.*"

"Take this child and nurse it *for me.*" Oh, that such words were more deeply heard in connection with the cry, "*motherless!*" As though to draw out the pity of our hearts for bereaved children, GOD has ordered it that no creature remains so long helpless as a human infant. We thank God for such homes as are formed at Stepney and Ilford, for the faithful, untiring efforts of Annie Macpherson, Mrs. Meredith, and others, in the work of children's rescue, and plead earnestly for their support; but the Church will not rise to her duty till it becomes, more or less, the characteristic of all her godly women—"if *she have brought up children.*"

The motherhood in the heart of every true woman, which gives her the instinctive faculty of tending and caring for the helpless—often congealed for want of exercise, and often, alas! sadly wasted (as in the case of the lonely lady who lived and died in the companionship of cats!)—might be brought to so much better account for herself and for society, if only it were drawn out in safe and holy channels. Happy Christian mothers may feel that there is enough for them in the training of their own little ones—though even such would find blessing in looking beyond their

well-filled, well-protected nurseries, and letting their child-love go out towards some orphaned wanderer—but for *widows*, and *desolate ones*, and *bereaved* mothers, what more precious and fruitful work?

There is many a Naomi—with *Mara* written across her history—who, if she would take a child to her bosom and become nurse to it, would find it a restorer of her life and nourisher of her failing years (Ruth iv. 15, 16). Surely it is not asking too much to put such a charge before her, when GOD Himself, in His own matchless love, exemplifies the principle of *adoption*, and the sweetness of our Good Shepherd seems to reach its climax in the words, "He shall *gather the lambs in His arms, and carry them in His bosom!*"

A few weeks ago, we had the privilege of welcoming amongst us the friend who has made a home for some twenty Irish orphans in Aughrim, and as she sat amongst the little orphaned group at Mildmay, which is now about the same number, it was pleasant to see how they clustered round her, eagerly looked at the picture of the motherless ones across the sea, and gladly sang the hymn they too had learned to sing of the better world, "*Over there.*" Miss Persse told us that it seemed enough reward for all her efforts when, last October, a dear little seven-year-old Kathleen went to the fold above, singing—

"There's a home for little children
Above the bright, blue sky;"

and whispering, with almost her last breath—

"Washed white in the blood of the Lamb."

We make no appeal for any particular Institution in thus writing, but would gladly receive a large heart-offering for "the orphans," and divide it amongst those whom we know are caring for them. If any service is truly womanly, and singularly blessed, it is surely this, and all that has been already attempted is but as a drop in the ocean of need. May all who love the little ones for Christ's sake, do more than they have hitherto done to rescue them from the chill and blight of the unsheltered lot to which they are too often left, and throw around them the protecting influences of a loving home!

It is touching to hear of the desolate babes who, lost in the crowd of a great city, struggle on in life by themselves, sharing the crust which the sale of match-boxes or a chance errand brings, keeping close together like the lambs on the hill-side, but in an atmosphere that is never sweetened by the pure breath of heaven, or made bright with the sunny cheer of love. Even in outward circumstances—with the grass freely grown for their food, the rock for their shelter, and the mountain stream for their drink — the motherless lambs, though we pitied them, would fare far better than the poor, lonely orphan, cast adrift upon the world; but here the comparison stops. We have something more than earth's bread to ask for those whose motherless history begins with the sad record of a more fatal slide than the literal lost sheep ever perished in. In the highest sense, we want to rescue them, and this can only be done as the *soul's* need is realised as well as that of the body, and we catch the

spirit of Him "who came *to seek* and TO SAVE that which was lost."

Let us not be afraid to be faithful with ourselves in this matter. We know what a tale of sacrificing love follows the familiar stanza, which is now sung almost everywhere, as a thrilling description of the tenderness of the Good Shepherd towards the one "far away," when—

> "Out in the desert He heard its cry,
> Sick and helpless, and ready to die."

Jesus did not leave it there; but, as another hymn beautifully says—

> "The Shepherd *sought* His sheep,
> The Father sought His child,
> They *followed me* o'er vale and hill,
> O'er desert, waste, and wild.
>
> "They found me nigh to death,
> Famished, and faint, and lone,
> They bound me with *the bands of love*,
> They *saved* the wandering one."

It is not enough to sing of such things; we need to ask, Are we *imitating* our God in this? or, as far as we are concerned, shutting our ears to the orphans' wail—do we let them remain, unsought, and uncared for, to perish in the cold? The Lord give us quicker ears to hear and tenderer hearts to respond to the pitiful and pleading cry which is everywhere mingling with the voice of the multitude, and going up to the Lord of Hosts—"MOTHERLESS!"

VII.

Between the Showers.

A LESSON OF OPPORTUNITY.

"The Lord will command His loving-kindness in the day time,
in the night His song shall be with Me."

BETWEEN THE SHOWERS.

A LESSON OF OPPORTUNITY.

It was a summer day without sunshine. The rain fell in heavy drops, and the wind swept by in such pitiless gusts, as made one think rather of November than June. There was a bleakness in the air, and a sombre aspect about everything, that could not fail to depress any who were sensitive to atmospheric influences.

I stepped out for a minute, to see whether there appeared any prospect of brightening, when, in an instant, a sweet, rich gush of song greeted me. Looking up, I saw that the shower was for a brief season stayed; there was a lull in the storm, and the song proceeded from a little bird perched on a tree close by. It seemed as though that carol had been pent up in its tiny throat, all ready to break forth the very moment the wind would give it a chance, so heartily did it warble it out; and then, with inimitable agility, down it flew, straight, as it appeared, to the very right corner of a small garden plot, and secured for itself or for its nestlings a worm. All was done quick as thought; the song was sung and the food was obtained in the short interval of calm weather; then down

poured the rain afresh, and the gusts blew on as fiercely as ever, and back went the little bird, to wait for its next opportunity, to its perch on the tree.

But I had learned a lesson. Times of trial—life's rainy days—seasons of storm and cloud—the dark hours which make up so large a portion of our experience here—were they not imaged before me? and in presence of that little songster, I asked, *What should be their effect?* Then He who taught it to sing and work "between the showers" seemed to answer, "Whoso offereth praise glorifieth Me. If for a season heaviness should hush the utterance of thy joyful song, it should never damp thy spirit of praise. If it suspend thy activities, it should never cause them to cease."

And the lesson thus impressed upon my own mind in all simplicity, may have been given as a seed-thought for others. When St. John, under the guidance of the Spirit of GOD, was sending the message of the Lord Jesus to His waiting servants, did he not embrace the whole family of the household of faith, when he styled himself "your *companion* in tribulation" (Rev. i. 9)? And can we fail to awaken a response in many hearts, when we touch a subject which implies this companionship? He whose glory is now before us as the hope of our future, is the great Forerunner of the children of affliction, Himself pre-eminently the "Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief." And there follow Him, under a variety of circumstances and forms of trial, a countless number of suffering ones, who are sometimes in-

clined to say, in bitterness of spirit, "All Thy waves and Thy billows are gone over me."

In order that none may think themselves excluded, we might single out special visitations of chastening in writing thus—protracted discipline, which in some cases seems to extend to a life-long trial; and in venturing to speak of such we feel we must tread softly. It would be cruel to make light of the deep mystery of sorrow—our Father never makes light of it. But there is another view we are less prone to take—viz., the *great responsibility* connected with affliction; so that we may almost count it true, that the heavier it is, the greater opportunities does it bring of service and testimony.

Perhaps no temptation is more common than to make our sorrows an excuse for our barrenness and dulness, whereas GOD, our loving Father, sends them to increase our fruitfulness and joy. "No affliction for the present seemeth joyous, but grievous; nevertheless, afterward *it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness* to them that are exercised thereby." "Tribulation worketh patience; and patience, experience; and experience, hope." To the submissive child there are always seasons of special refreshment and teaching in trial, which should be diligently improved. In every desert there is an oasis; in every toilsome path, a "brook by the way;" in every dark tunnel, shafts which let in beams of light. No season of trial is without its "lulls" and "breaks," and for those intervals "*between the showers*" the child of GOD should

have ready a song that has been gathering in his heart, even during the dark hours when the rain descended and the winds blew. Between the gusts of a storm that may have driven him to his hiding-place there should be heard the sweet notes of hope, and joy, and glory to the Lord.

> "If in our daily course our mind
> Be set to hallow all we find,
> New treasures still of countless price
> God will provide for sacrifice."

And the sacrifice the most continually offered by hearts in fellowship with Him will be the acceptable sacrifice of praise (Heb. xiii. 15; 1 Pet. ii. 5).

It matters not what may be the burden pressing on any child of God—each heart knoweth its own bitterness—each is baptized in its own sorrow; the song of praise, wakened and sustained by the Everlasting Love which "many waters cannot quench," can never be out of season. It will bring glory to the Lord, and strength to the soul that sings it. Under its magic influence, the phantoms of care will vanish away, and give place to bright visionings of "the King in His beauty" and "the land that is very far off." It will refresh the weary spirit, and nerve the feeble knees for another courageous climb on the heavenly height. The redeemed are not only to "*come to Zion* with songs" (Isa. xxxv. 10), but also "to sing *in the ways of the Lord*" (Ps. xxxviii. 5), amidst the chequered experiences of their pilgrimage; and Cowper's words will never cease to be sweet

true, as long as a tear-drop remains on the
: of a single saint for GOD's own hand to
away:—

"Sometimes a light surprises
The Christian while he sings;
It is the Lord, who rises
With healing in His wings.

"When comforts are declining,
He grants the soul again
A season of clear shining
To cheer it after rain."

or is this all. The praise first, then, as oppor-
y may be given, *the effort* to sow, or gather, or
None should be so ready to every good word
work, as those who have been taken aside by
Lord for the teachings of the wilderness, or who
kept, through the discipline of trial, in close
idence upon Himself. It may be that to some,
isome days and nights are appointed in the
iber of sickness; to others, lonely hours of sor-
in the pain of bereavement; to others, heavy
ens of life's responsibilities and perplexities.
all have *intervals* in which something may be
for the Master, which He will reveal to the
e eye; and whatever that something be, done
the Lord, it will, even in its present influence,
and gladden the heart that throws itself into the
, relieving, as nothing else can, the dark mono-
of sorrow; whilst in its future result, we know
"the labour shall not be in vain in the Lord."
that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious

seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him" (Ps. cxxvi. 6).

Let none, then, of the Lord's tried ones be tempted to postpone either their song or their work for brighter days or clearer skies, but, under the shelter of that precious Saviour, who is as a hiding-place from the wind and a covert from the tempest, watchfully embrace all the opportunities which GOD gives "*between the showers.*"

THE HUSH OF MEMORY.

These thoughts, which rise not to the heights of faith and courage, whither the Lord intends to lead His tried ones, will yet be understood by many who are in the school of adversity, as an exercise of soul often preceding the fuller notes of victory and praise. Do not indulged memories of pain, and sin, and sorrow, and bereavement—"bringing over the heart a weight it should fling aside for ever"—too frequently hinder both in service and in song? May the Lord teach us not only "to remember" (Deut. viii. 2), but also "*to forget*" (Gen. xli. 51, 52), that we may be "fruitful in the land of our affliction."

O MEMORY! sleep and wake not, for my heart
Is anguished by thy whisperings; and if thou art
A friend—as friend in brighter days thou once did'st seem—
I pray thee, leave me now, with just the Present's dream.

I would not wake the Past, although it bore
Upon its bosom precious flowers, and wore
A smile sometimes; for it has sad, dark things
Which, 'neath thy magic touch, afresh unsheathe their stings.

Wilt thou not *keep* the Past, O Memory?
I charge thee, faithful to my counsel be,
And hold its secrets garnered safely all,
Till I am stronger and can bear thy great recall.

I *shall* be stronger soon—these clouds will clear ;
Soon the bright world of vision draweth near—
The *resurrection* world ; then mayest thou break
The silence—then I will not fear to hear thee speak.

For I shall then know all—yes, *all ;* and see
In heavenly Light thy living pictures, Memory !
And with thee quite familiarly converse again ;
But if thou art a friend, oh leave me now—till THEN.

I have committed all my life, its days, its hours,
To ONE—whose claim upon my ransomed powers
Is such, that every other voice must silent be—
Therefore to Him I bring thee, faithful Memory !

VIII.

The Word of the Moment.

A LESSON LEARNED IN A BUSY THOROUGHFARE.

"Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh."

THE WORD OF THE MOMENT.

A LESSON LEARNED IN A BUSY THOROUGHFARE.

A WALK into the City to-day supplied me with a subject for thought, and gave a striking instance of the way in which the ordinary prefaces of courtesy and friendly greeting are, by common consent amongst the men of the world, put aside when a leading idea possesses the mind. How often has a Christian been rebuked for uttering the great burden of his heart at a time and in a way that seemed "out of season!" We readily admit that the best words should be spoken in the best time and way, but there are occasions when a strong conviction or impulse, by its very urgency, forces aside the routine of conventionality and the rules of calculation; the man or woman possessed by it *must* speak out.

Two City men illustrated this to-day. They came across each other suddenly—unexpectedly, it appeared, and but for a moment—in one of the busiest thoroughfares near the Royal Exchange. No time for greeting, no time for useless remark; as they met face to face, the words uttered by one to the other were simply these: "FOUR SHILLINGS AND A FARTHING." "What!" anxiously exclaimed his comrade, as though another

figure had sounded in his ears. "*Four shillings and a farthing*," was repeated by the first speaker. "All right!" was the response, given in a satisfied tone. And this was all. They scarcely stopped to say it, nor did I stop to listen. It was a word thrown out by the way, indicating a fellowship in one all-absorbing pursuit, which allowed nothing to retard or interfere with it. They spoke as pilgrims hastening to the shrine of Mammon, who understood each other's haste.

"*Four shillings and a farthing!*" Those words still sound in my ears. How much perhaps depended upon them! Great loss or great gain—great disappointment or great exultation. And though to the uninitiated, like myself, they were strange and meaningless, there was no reluctance in speaking them out; for they represented what to the speakers was of vast importance.

Was there not something in this by which the Lord's children may be instructed? Shall the world rebuke them for utterances which to those without are as "idle tales," when out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh? Shall they excuse themselves in guilty silence, when so great a thing as their Lord's talents are entrusted to them, and no kindling of souls stirs them up to manifest unmistakably that they are trading for Him as diligently and as eagerly as the worldling for his passing treasures? Let us have a care lest, waiting as we think for the right time to speak, we mistake cowardice for prudence, and, wait-

ing too long, chill our fellow-workers, and allow some soul to slip away from our influence unwarned and yet unsaved, whom an earnest word might have arrested.

Oh, for more spontaneous testimony before the world of what is uppermost in our heart if we love the Lord! What is wanted is not the studied religious phrase, too often uttered in an unnatural tone of voice, more calculated to repel than win; but simple, childlike words of faith and love, that gush out from happy souls, who *cannot but* speak the things they have seen and heard.

Such words cannot come forth unless the things of Jesus *are* uppermost. The river does not overflow its banks till the streams, flowing down from the hills, cause it to swell and rise. The branches do not run over the wall till the growth of the tree is quickened by the ascending sap. And neither is this spontaneous testimony given to the glory of Him who bought us till we have in Him not only life, but life *more abundantly*. For this let us yearn, for this let us pray: to be so filled with the Spirit, so filled with the joy of the Lord, so filled with love as to speak without effort. When the words we want to say tremble on our lips or die unuttered, may not the failure often be attributed either to a low state of spiritual affection or a lack of simplicity in our intended form of expression?

"*It is so sweet to believe in Jesus*," said a dying girl to the thoughtless companion beside her. It was a childlike testimony, and there was little theology in it, but those simple words, carried home to the heart by the Spirit of GOD, won another soul for Him. And

not alone simplicity, but more *courage* is wanted. Facing for the first time after her conversion a large group of fellow-workers in the factory, who were quick-sighted enough to observe a change in her expression and demeanour as she came that morning among them, fresh with the first joy of a new life—a young disciple was assailed by the common question, "O Mary! are you going to turn religious?" Instead of being cowed by it, she replied, in a bright, cheerful tone, "Yes, I am; that is, I mean to serve the Lord, *for I am sure He is worth serving!*" This answer at once set her on a vantage-ground for future usefulness. It was the spontaneous, courageous confession of a thoroughly convinced heart.

We must never keep out of sight the fact that all true words are but the expression of the inner thoughts. They have no value except as they proceed from and manifest forth the life within. If separated from this, they are falsehood and hypocrisy. Therefore, if we desire to speak more for Jesus, we must become more thoroughly possessed by Jesus; and, depend upon it, it is not the *many* words that will commend the blessed cause we wish to serve, but rather the love and reality about our simple utterances that bespeak them as coming fresh from the heart, linked, as they always should be, with the consistent testimony of a holy, Christ-like life.

IX.

The Teaching of a Mountain Lake.

"He watereth the hills from His chambers."

THE TEACHING OF A MOUNTAIN LAKE.

There is a tongue in every leaf, *a voice* in *every rill*,
A voice that speaketh everywhere, in flood and fire, in earth and air,
A tongue that's never still.
'Tis the Great Spirit wide diffused thro' everything we see,
That with our spirits communeth of things mysterious—
Life, Death, Time, and Eternity!"

WHO that has come away to the mountain side from ıe sounds of even ordinary human life can fail to ave been struck with a new and strange sense of *lence* and *solitude?* More deeply still is this felt in ɔntrast with the busy stir of the multitude, and all ıat is inseparable from the ceaseless working of things reat and small in the heart of a City.

A few hours of railway speed do wonders in these ays. Starting in the morning from a centre of ustling activity, where thousands seem to pass you y who have no time for a moment's pause or rest in ıe race of life, you may see the sun set in the evening ver a scene of quiet beauty or solemn grandeur, in one f those mountain retreats which are in many places pen to the wearied worker. It will be intensely efreshing to look around, to get a glimpse of heights ·ou hope to scale, stretches of sweet landscape you ntend to become familiar with; but if it is a calm, ɔright day, and especially should you be a little tired vith your journey, the first impression that will make

itself felt is the deep quiet caused by the singular absence of accustomed sounds.

This hush of the mountains will soon become to you a very precious thing,—shutting away, as it does, all the voices of man, that you may for a time hear only the voice of GOD, as He speaks to you in Nature and in Grace,—but before you become a little used to it, its effect is almost painfully solemn. You miss the undertone of life, which, even in your loneliest moments at home, is unconsciously stealing in upon the silence of your soul, and realise, as you never can do there, what it is to be alone with GOD.

Over and over again, this experience is repeated as you explore the heights that surround you, and get into tracks of rock and moorland, where only a few scattered flocks find scanty pasturage, and the gush of the streams and the sweep of the wind is all of sound that bears you company. Everything around is grand and wildly beautiful, *but all is silent.* The question forces itself upon the mind, "What is being done in this silence?"

A few weeks ago I sat beside a clear lake in one of these mountain solitudes. It was high up on the Snowdon range, in one of those deep hollows which are found at different elevations in ascending its rocky steeps. Above it, on one side, were almost perpendicular cliffs; on the other, the sort of grass that bog-land produces was sprinkled with a few ferns and wild flowers—just a very few, for the place seemed almost too desolate for flowers! It was truly a region that no man inhabited; and those who passed through it were only led thither by adventure and curiosity.

My thoughts soon shaped themselves into the query referred to, What is this lake doing here? Why are its calm waters placed where no one can see the sunbeams that play upon them, and none can fill the empty pitcher from its basin? Very beautiful when the traveller's eye rests upon it, but why so far away from the haunts of men—so entirely apart in its loneliness? Has God made this lake only to be now and then looked at by adventurous tourists?

Soon and sweetly came the answer. At the lower end, where the ground sloped away towards the next plateau, two or three silver streams issued out of the mountain basin. I was able to follow their course down the side—sometimes losing sight of them, as they diverged from the more winding foot-track, but always coming across them again. On they went, unimpeded by any obstruction in the way, leaping over or coursing round fragments of rock, till arriving at a precipitous bit of headland, where they seemed to be reinforced by other little tributaries, they fell magnificently into a much larger lower lake, from which the same waters issued *as a river!*

What a beautiful chain of connecting links we may always find in GOD'S works! These silent heights are the great laboratories where cloud and vapour are distilled into rain and dew, with which GOD refreshes His inheritance when it is weary. These mountain lakes are the great reservoirs of the precious drops which make glad the earth. In summer days, when many of the lower streams are lessened or dried up from drought, the lake in the rocky hollow is clear

and full. There it lies near enough to the mountain summit—which never lets a cloud touch it without sucking away some of its moisture—to receive all the tiny drops thus sedulously gathered and faithfully passed down in the service of man. And what it receives, that it as faithfully ministers, sending on, in its turn, the fresh supply of water, first stored on the mountain top, to the streams and rivers which water the earth and quench the thirst of its inhabitants. "HE sendeth the springs into the valleys *which run* (in the first instance) *among the hills.*"

But the lake had other teaching to give, and it spoke to me also in parable. Very, very often in the Word of GOD do we see such charges as this: "*Be still;*" "*Be silent* before Me;" "*Hold thee still* in the Lord." Why is it so? For what purpose is this quiet of soul enjoined? That, like the lake high up in mountain solitude, we, dear friends, apart from all human instrumentalities, may receive straight from GOD the living water, which will then "spring forth" from us for the life and refreshment of others. If the lower streams of Christian testimony and service are to be kept clear, and to gush forth in sparkling gladness, the upper springs of love and faith and hope must flow from a deep reservoir, ever supplied by those Divine droppings which only reach the soul on the mount of communion. "*Jesus went up into a mountain to pray.*" Let not these words be lightly passed over in days when His followers seem called to live much in the crowd. If He, the Perfect One, needed to go apart for converse

with GOD, how much more must we, who are compassed with infirmity!

We would earnestly counsel young Christians to begin their course fully persuaded of this truth, that if they would minister they must *receive*, and that no really profitable work for GOD can be carried on without much prayer, and much study of His Word. And if the day gets quickly filled in after it has fairly begun, and there is only the chance of a few moments here and there for ejaculation and thought, then those who would truly live, must consecrate, as the Master did, *the morning hours*, when "rising up a great while before day, He went out, and departed into a solitary place, and there prayed."

Methinks He is before us in His wondrous life of communion and service, embodying the lessons taught by the lake in the valley, and the lake on the height. *Alone* with His Father, He pleaded for man. *Alone*, He looked into His face and heart of love, and gathered strength for all He undertook on man's behalf. He was in these moments replenished with the Holy Ghost, and coming down into the plain, midst the company of His disciples and the multitude of the people, the streams of Divine compassion, and healing, and doctrine went forth from Him abundantly.

The Lord Jesus was no recluse; His days were spent in ceaseless activity; He lived for and among men; and yet—the secret is written for our instruction—when every man went to his own house, "*Jesus went to the Mount of Olives.*"

Nor for Himself only did our Blessed Master seek these solitudes. In times of special manifestation to His disciples, it was His wont to draw them away from the multitude. Three of these occasions are very memorable:—

1st. In the ordination of the Twelve, we read (Mark iii. 13, 14): "*And He goeth up into a mountain*, and calleth unto Him whom He would, and they came unto Him." They who were to instruct others were first called apart into sacred converse with the Great Teacher. Mark the connection: "And He ordained twelve *that they should be with Him*, and *that He might send them forth* to preach, and to have power to heal sicknesses, and to cast out devils."

2d. When His three chosen ones were made "eye-witnesses of His majesty," we read again (Mark ix. 2): "And after six days, Jesus taketh Peter, and James, and John, and leadeth them up *into a high mountain apart by themselves*, and He was transfigured before them." The sight of the excellent glory, and the Voice that spoke from Heaven to confirm the faith of those who were to go forth and testify that what they followed was no "cunningly-devised fable," could only break in upon their souls in the silence of the holy mount. Unable at the time to comprehend all the teaching of that hour—when first Moses and Elias appeared talking with Jesus, then out of the bright, overshadowing cloud, a Voice came, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased," after which they lifted up their eyes and saw no man, save

Jesus only,— we know, from St. Peter's beautiful allusion to it in after days, what a deep impression it made. It was one of those times of silence and revelation, from which is still flowing a glad stream of glorious hope, and it shall flow on till the vision of Tabor becomes fully interpreted in the glory of the Lord manifested to the whole earth.

3d. Once more. After all things were accomplished for which Jesus had left the bosom of His Father, and the time drew near for Him to be received up, He summoned His disciples yet again to a sacred interview. St. Matthew tells us (xxviii. 16–20): "Then the eleven disciples went away into Galilee *into a mountain, where Jesus had appointed them.* And when they saw Him, they worshipped Him, but some doubted." What was the message reserved for this interview? "Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, *All power is given unto Me* in heaven and in earth." He brings them at once to the height and depth of His immeasurable fulness, and gives them a sight of Himself as "the river of GOD which is full of water." What then? Is He to be a spring shut up, a fountain sealed? In one sense, but not in another. They who have been with Him are to be as so many channels, out of which living streams from this mighty Reservoir shall go forth to renew the face of the earth. "Go ye, *therefore,*" He says, "and teach all nations and lo, I am with you alway, even to the end of the world."

These memorable scenes have their counterpart

even now—for the Lord Jesus of "yesterday" is the same Jesus "to-day;" and the needs of those who follow Him are unchanged by the lapse of ages. And so we find that special calls to service, special visions of glory, and special endowments of power, are given in times of *apartness*. By many, the literal mountain-top can only be visited in imagination; but when the soul knows how to soar, it can find its "high places" on very unlikely ground. The *indispensable* thing is to be ALONE WITH JESUS, to get into the secret of His presence, to be led by Him beside the still waters. The difficulties of circumstance will be overcome in proportion as this necessity of spiritual life is deeply realised. Some who make too much of ordinary hindrances to communion may be rebuked by the little cabin-boy, who, when asked how in a life spent amongst ungodly sailors, he could ever find a place to pray, said, that *the masthead* was *his closet*—that "when he was sent up aloft, he always stopped a few minutes at the top to speak to Jesus!"

Let us but be persuaded that the value of "the seen" depends upon "the unseen," and we shall then seek, through the Spirit of grace and supplication helping our infirmities, to know more of holy converse and calm abiding with Christ and persevering prayer. Thus shall our own souls first be filled, and the overflow, wherever it descends, shall be a stream of life!

THE PETITION OF ACHSAH.

"Thou hast given me a south land; give me also springs of water."
—JUDGES i. 15.

My Father! thou hast blessed abundantly
Thy child; the lines are fallen unto me
In pleasant places. I can look around
And see broad acres, which thy love has given;
Fields, where a harvest rich may recompense
The lab'rer's toil. But oh! one thing I ask,
Before a sod is turned of the new ground—
Before the sower scatters precious seed—
Before the flock is driven to the hill—
Give me fresh springs of water!

What if these sunny slopes be parched with drought,
The cornfields wither for the lack of rain;
What if the lambs should bleat in vain for food,
And all the herd the pasture should forsake
For want of grass—how blighted then my land
And desolate! Father! oh give me yet
The springs of water—fresh streams that in their course
Bring gladness, life, and healing; where the sun
May cool his ardent ray, and come to fetch
The dewdrop. Then I shall have fruit of corn,
And wine, and oil to make my household glad,
And we will speak together of thy love!

The father was content, and gave his child
That day the upper and the nether springs,
When she became the bride of Othniel.
"*Give us fresh springs of water!*" Still the cry
From children's hearts unceasingly goes up,
O Father! our own Father, unto Thee.
Large fields are spread before us, but they lie
All waste and desolate because of drought,
And Thou hast given them—for the earth is Thine—
Bidding us plough and sow in patient hope.
We try to labour—break the stubborn clods—

And bring the seed, Thy precious seed of truth,
But oft in vain. And now we come and plead
For that which can alone rejoice and make
To blossom all the desert land. Send forth
The streams, that flow from out Thy Throne on high,
Let Thy GREAT SPIRIT, AS A LIVING FLOOD,
Descend, that there may spring from out the death
And darkness, living souls, born to new joy,
New hopes and aims; souls that will rise to Thee,
As harvest plenteous from that one "CORN
OF WHEAT," which died, that it might bear "much fruit."

X.

Mown Grass.

A LESSON FOR HARVEST DAYS.

"He shall come down like rain upon the mown grass."

MOWN GRASS.

A LESSON FOR HARVEST DAYS.

AT a time when the mower's scythe is still busy, aying low the waving stores of grass in the fields, and when the sound of its sharpening makes a pleasant note in the summer music, we look at this promise and ask, Why is the effect of such a blessed visitation, as this passage refers to, best illustrated by the picture of *mown* grass? Why, when the Lord cometh down to refresh His Church, is she not represented as waving before Him in beauty as "the flower of grass"?

"Observe," says one,* "the peculiar characters of the grass, which adapt it especially for the service of man, are its apparent *humility* and *cheerfulness*. Its humility: in that it seems created only for lowest service—appointed to be trodden on and fed upon. Its cheerfulness: in that it seems to exult under all kinds of violence and suffering. You roll it, and it is stronger the next day; you mow it, and it multiplies its shoots, as if it were grateful; you tread upon it, and it only sends up richer perfume."

In these words, as simple as they are striking, is

* Ruskin.

embodied the answer to our question. But we will look a little more closely at this parable from Nature. Some years ago it was forcibly brought before me. When taking possession of a garden, which had been sadly neglected, the remark was made, in reference to a green plot in the centre, on account of its rank and tangled growth, "You had better do away with that altogether." Instead, however, of using the spade, *the scythe* was brought into requisition. The unsightly stalks were unsparingly cut away, the weeds were cleared, and very soon there was quite a metamorphosis—"the tender grass springing out of the earth from clear shining after rain" gave to the little lawn the appearance of freshness and beauty.

All who delight in grassy slopes and levels know how their smoothness and verdure depend upon the frequent use of the scythe. While the dew of the morning rests upon them, the careful gardener is busy, shearing away all he can from the surface, which is re-clothed again and again with a mantle of tender green. And all over the land, once a year, the pasture fields yield up their produce to the mower's hand.

Walk over the acres which have but lately been harvested, and the ground appears covered with stubble. How your eye misses the varied beauties which lately waved and glistened in the sunlight—the flowering blades of different hues and form, the bright clover blossom, the homely buttercup! But wait awhile, and when the latter rain has descended, visit that field again. You will hardly know it to be the same. The superincumbent weight removed, the gentle, fertilising

showers have penetrated to the deepest fibres of the root of the plant, causing its youth to be renewed, so that, what looked like "stubble" is now everywhere as a carpet of verdure. The fresh springing is the result of the close mowing; the putting on the new comes from the casting off the old.

So is it in the kingdom of GOD. The glory of man is in Scripture compared to the "flower of grass." Beautiful though it seems to the earthly eye, it must be shorn away and kept low if the revivifying influences of the Holy Spirit are so to reach the inner life that it shall perpetually spring forth in immortal youth and purity. Jesus must sway our hearts' deepest affections, and touch the very roots of our being, if we are to grow up before Him as the planting in which He will be glorified.

GOD would have His children to remember that, like the grass, they have a *lowly* calling, and because of the tendency of our natural flesh and spirit towards an exuberant and too often tangled growth, there must be a frequent clearing away of all that interferes with the humble, healthful Christ-life in which He has anew created us. Called to lowly service at His feet, He knows far better than we do that there are times when, like the grass, His adopted ones need the pressure of the roller as well as the sweeping of the scythe, and "He chastens us *for our profit*, that we may be partakers of His holiness." He will never "root up" the plants of His own planting, but, as a faithful husbandman, He must often prune them down. Every "high

thing" that exalts itself must fall and fade, and many a blossom on which the sunshine rested must be taken away. It is the *mown* grass that imbibes the tiniest drops of dew or rain, and so it is the shorn and chastened soul that most readily receives the visitations of grace.

Have you never seen a life made fruitful, as it never was before, and beautiful through a sanctified sorrow? Have you never seen a soul satisfied with Jesus in the days of famine, as it never was in the time of wealth? The Lord has come down upon that life and upon that soul as "rain upon the *mown* grass."

If it be so now in individual cases, will it not be universally true of those who are Christ's at His coming, who are found in the attitude of waiting for Him with the longing of individual love? He has subdued them unto Himself—

> "The cords that bound their hearts to earth
> Are broken by His hand,"

their treasure is in heaven; loved ones are gone before, making this world seem indeed a desert; their life is hid with Christ in GOD, and when He, who is their life, shall appear, will not His coming be to them in gentle, but mighty power, sweet, and acceptable, and refreshing, "as rain upon the *mown* grass"?

The illustration would not be complete if we missed the teaching to be gathered from it that may cheer us *as Christian workers.* That which is mown away, and which for a time leaves the roots of the grass bare, is

not lost. It is stored as food for winter supply, and, by preserving the cattle, indirectly nourishes the life of man. One of the chief objects for which grass covers the face of the earth is that it may be "fed upon," and in a striking way this humble minister to man and beast is all the better for its service. If it can but have its drink of rain, the more it is cropped the fresher it grows.

Dear friends, may we take a lesson from the pasture beneath our feet, realising that *our calling* is *to minister*, and be willing to be kept low for the sake of others: giving, as nourished by Christ, we grow; and growing as we give!

LISTENING!

When the world is busy round me,
And each wave of sound is stirred;
When the thronging crowds press by me,
Onward by strong impulse spurred:
I am *listening*—
Listening for the Master's word;
Listening till His voice be heard.

When the heavy cloud of sorrow
Falls upon the darkened home;
'Mid the bitter cry of anguish,
Or the heart's unuttered moan:
I am *listening*—
Listening for one voice well known;
For my Father's voice alone.

When conflicting thoughts assail me,
And strange doctrines reach my ear;
When the sheep are all bewildered,
And no trusty guide seems near:
I am *listening*—
Till the Shepherd's voice I hear;
Listening—till He appear.

When the voices of affection,
Never more on earth will wake;
And the heart's deep earnest yearning,
Silent keeps for their dear sake:
I am *listening*—
Listening till the Bridegroom speak,
Till His love the silence break.

When GOD's truth is placed before me,
With its holy words of cheer;
But in vain my finite reason
Strives to make its meaning clear:
I am *listening*—
Listening with patient ear,
Till the Spirit's voice I hear!

Listening *ever;* Jesus, keep us!
May we at Thy feet abide;
Ne'er beguiled by earthly voices,
Always waiting at Thy side:
Waiting—*listening*—
For *Thy* word, our faithful Guide;
Speak! and we are satisfied.

XI.

The Beacon Masts.

A LESSON LEARNED AT THE SEA-SIDE.

"Concerning faith have made shipwreck."

THE BEACON MASTS.

A LESSON LEARNED AT THE SEASIDE.

ay, in a secluded part of Pembrokeshire, lay
:tched before us on a summer day of more than
:y loveliness. For nearly a week a sea mist had
d over the land, but it seemed to have exhausted
:o that the sun shone out from a cloudless sky,
e clearness of the air added depth and brilliancy
ry tint on flower and rock and water. The
)f the child of GOD amid such scenes, as the
whispered within, "Abba, Father," could not but
ı, "O Lord, how glorious art Thou in Thy
"

sing on the brow of a hill after a rather steep
to rest and to drink in a little of the beauty,
ged for something that could make the pleasant
on which we gazed indelible. A cottage,
ed all over after the fashion of the country, with
ıely wealth of flowers and creepers, stood on the
round just above us; and below, on our left, a
:ion of pines fringed the hill-side, and almost
l the little boat-house and pier at the foot.
g from among the trees a stack of white chim-
which told of another quiet homestead, was

visible, and the less-cultivated part which rose behind was beautifully mottled with rock and gorse and heather. On the hill to our right a market-town and its adjoining hamlets stretched far away inland, whilst seaward the rugged cliffs of the coast, as far as the eye could take them in, terminated in a fine headland. Between there was a valley, running down to the shore, and for about a mile it was skirted by a belt of fine sands, upon which, on a day like this, the advancing waves, booming in the distance, ended their cadence with that peculiar shingle music which seems to speak of peace and not of danger.

As for the *colour* of the sea—the jewel, as it seemed, in the lovely setting of the landscape—neither words nor pencil could paint it. Its matchless blue appeared deeper than ever, and as every rock stood out in sharp outline and contrast above its delicious expanse, one thought alone could prevail, "The sea is *His*, and He made it."

But as we looked closer, a sad sight presented itself. Down in that picturesque bay two masts were visible above the water, one quite erect, the other lying in a sloping direction, almost on a level with the surface. At first we thought them to be sea-marks purposely placed there, but on inquiry we learned that they were parts of wrecked vessels, the hulls of which were hopelessly buried in the sand beneath.

It was on a stormy night, two years ago, that these hapless ships, unable to round the farther point, made for the apparently secure haven which this bay pro-

mised. No rocks were to be feared, and the helmsman turned the rudder towards the longed-for shore. But there is sometimes an *unseen* peril greater than any that is seen, and they who in that hour of tempest steered away from the breakers were deceived by the sand. They went towards it for safe anchorage, but, alas! as they touched it, it gradually held them with a grip that grew deadlier every moment, and the tidings that flew over the hills from cottage to cottage the next morning were tidings of *shipwreck!* Sadly still, though silently, is the tale repeated by those beacon masts; and all the more sad did it seem as we looked down upon other vessels at anchor within a stone's throw of the spot, saw the little boats close by peacefully moored beside the pier, and a yacht, in full sail, scudding joyously across the bay.

Will it seem strange that from *the shadow* cast across the picture, rather than its sunny brightness, the deepest lesson was imprinted on my mind? For some time past, proofs have appeared to multiply of the *plausibility* wherewith the Enemy—whose aim is the ruin of souls—brings in some of the most dangerous doctrines; and as I looked at these stranded wrecks, they brought it vividly before me.

We fear the *rocks* of error, but oh! do we keep far enough away from the deceitful *sand?* Its smoothness too often misleads, and the music of the ripple that breaks over it beguiles many a heart—"surely it may anchor there!" If what old-fashioned Christians call "unscriptural" doctrines, people argue, came from

sceptics or scoffers, we would not listen for a mo
but such earnest men are now teaching them
surely they deserve a hearing. These "earnest"
mulgators of false doctrine, dear friends, what ar
but the helmsmen steering many a fair bark to
the direst destruction: It is "by good word
fair speches" that they "deceive the hearts c
simple."

Let us hear what the Lord says on this solemn s
I would ask you to turn with me to the second c
of the Second Epistle of Peter, and read careful
first three verses! "But there were false prophe
among the people, *even as there shall be false t*
among you, who *privily* shall bring in damnable he
EVEN denying the Lord that bought them, and
upon themselves *swift destruction*," &c. &c. O
with regard to the error spoken of—

1. It is taught by *accredited*, though false *teacl*
2. It is brought in PRIVILY—*i.e.*, by steal
 unsuspected means.
3. It culminates in the heresy of all here
 the denial of the Atonement—express
 the word "*even*."
4. It leads to "swift destruction."

The limits of this paper will not allow of mor
a few words of faithful warning and counsel to
children, to beware lest, being led away by the
of the wicked, they fall from their own steadfa
Few can hold intercourse, either personally or t
books, even with a moderately large circle of Chri

without being aware of a very unsettled state of thought affecting fundamental truths. These truths are not attacked with a show of enmity, but under the guise of friendship. "GOD is too good to do so-and-so," is the sandy ground on which many a destructive reasoning is based.

The attempt seems fruitless to judge between errors, and among the many conflicting opinions that distract the mind, to say whether this or that phase of false doctrine is likely to have the more injurious tendency; and we cannot too often remind ourselves that *all* error, in so far as it is in its very least degree divergence from truth, is hurtful; that as the whole truth is needed to make the perfect Christian, so the smallest portion of false teaching accepted dwarfs and cripples the soul that receives it. But while admitting this, we are warranted by the Word of GOD to make a distinction, which requires that over some spiritual error, more dangerous than others, a special beacon of warning be erected. We find this special beacon—this danger signal—strongly marked in the passage before us—"EVEN denying *the Lord that* BOUGHT them."

Any subterfuge, therefore, that explains away the Atonement—any reasoning that weakens the reality of "the precious blood-shedding," without which there is no remission—is the worst, the most fatal error into which a hapless soul can fall. The ground towards which it is beguiled with promise of rest, will prove itself to be as the quicksand, in which it will hopelessly sink. There is apparent smoothness in the argument that because GOD is merciful, sinners will

not eternally perish; that "the wrath of GOD," poured out for our sakes upon the Lord Jesus as the Sin Bearer, is but a figure of speech; but it cuts right away the foundations of holiness and justice upon which the Covenant is based, and dare not be trusted. The wrath of GOD is as great a reality as the love of GOD. Shall mortal man be more just than GOD? Shall he that contendeth with the Almighty instruct Him?

If we would avoid destructive error of any kind, the only safe course is to keep close to the *words* of Scripture, and close to the DIVINE GUIDE, whose office it is to unfold the truths of Scripture, and never to commit ourselves to any teacher who speculates about "the deep things of GOD." Storm-clouds are gathering and timid hearts sometimes think of the truth and judgments of the Divine counsels as a frowning headland both terrible and impassable in the night tempest. They cannot trust, and so they fear. Many a pilot is coming to the rescue of these doubting ones with a new chart and new rules of navigation, and promising a speedier and more easily-reached shelter than our Captain's sailing orders would insure. But none give heed to their vain offers. There is but one track which will bring us to the haven where we would be—the track of *faith*—which holds fast from beginning to end her confidence in "the precious blood of Christ," and owns no compass but the infallible word of Christ. The simplicity and subjection of faith conquer all difficulties, and the soul that believes GOD, and in His own emphatic words, "believes *on* in" Jesus (John xiv. 1), even now enters into rest (Heb.

ri). All other seeming refuges are refuges of lies, d over many who have tried them are sadly written ı warning words which, like the beacon masts in ı fair bay, tell to those who ponder the sorrowful e of irretrievable loss—"*who concerning faith have de shipwreck.*"

THE ONE NAME.

SEARCH well the Scripture from its earliest page,
Read all its histories of every age,
Let type and prophecy thy thoughts engage—

And if by God's own Spirit taught to see
Their hidden light, their true reality,
Of one dear Name each book will speak to thee.

As Nature with her many voices sings
But *one* great song—and all Creation rings
With praise to Him who guides its secret springs—

So do the higher notes of Revelation blend
In one sweet harmony from end to end;
Its theme His love who died—the sinner's Friend.

XII.

Consecrated Diamonds.

"Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive—RICHES."

CONSECRATED DIAMONDS.

A LESSON FOR THE BOUDOIR.

rG the stirring incidents brought before us in the ngs held at Mildmay, in connection with Christian in many lands, one in its beautiful simplicity practical suggestiveness seemed so to come to the , that we desire to enshrine it in a separate place emorial.

he Princess Eugenie of Sweden has for many devoted herself to efforts for the good of her le. Schools and institutions have been of deep est to her, and her purse as well as her heart has open in supporting them to the full extent of her is.

ut when the sympathies of a loving soul are ved free play, the needs supplied and the sorrows ved give an intenser realisation of those that still in, and when the grace of liberality is bestowed od, those who possess it are "beyond their power" ng of themselves to go forward in the blessed of succour.

isiting the cottages in the Island of Gottland, her ner residence, the Princess was touched by finding r cases of hopeless suffering amongst the poor

women. It has pleased the Lord that she should herself be a sufferer from incurable illness, and sympathy prompted her to do something for these her poor sisters in sorrow. She thought how good it would be to build for them an Hospital Home.

But even though a royal Princess, there was a limit to her resources, and she might have put the thought aside with the plea that she had "given away in charity" as much as she was justified in giving. But no! there was a warmth within her heart that would not allow of such a disappointment. The love of Christ was constraining her, and that love knows how to overcome difficulties. The question she at once asked was, How can I get the money to do it?

She was not able to look at an additional supply from her stated income, but there were some bright things of great value sparkling in a casket, which belonged to her, of which she thought; and she said, first to herself and then to the King, her royal brother, "*May I not sell my diamonds?*" Consent was given; they were sent to England to the care of the wife of the Swedish Ambassador; and the sum these diamonds realised was more than sufficient to build a Home for Incurables in the Island of Gottland. Time passed on, and though the jewel-box was empty, the little asylum was full. Two summers ago, one of its poor inmates, who seemed peculiarly ignorant and inaccessible, was deeply laid upon the heart of the Princess. "*I prayed much for that woman,*" were her own words in narrating what followed. The month came when *she* usually leaves her summer retreat for her winter

in the city, and she was paying her farewell
the sufferers, when the matron said, pointing
very woman, "I think you will find her
l."

Princess approached her bed, and the words
eted her from the now almost dying one were,
ık GOD that the blood of Jesus Christ His Son
:h from all sin, and that *He has cleansed mine,*"
ears running fast down her cheeks. They were
s of a new-born soul, stirred to its depths by
; sight of Jesus, and as the light of Heaven
d through them, and made her own eyes weep
—"in *those tears,*" said the Princess, "*I saw*
nonds again!"

e, who long to possess jewels of fairest lustre,
do likewise. "A hundredfold NOW in this
o says the Master, every one shall find who
saken" anything "for My Name's sake."

XIII.

Detached.

A LESSON LEARNED ON A RAILWAY PLATFORM.

"None of us liveth to himself."

"*DETACHED.*"

A LESSON LEARNED ON A RAILWAY PLATFORM.

waiting for the train for which my ticket was
at a suburban station. It was near a junction,
t the traffic was considerable, and many a whistle
my attention to trains passing up and down that
othing to say to me.

watched them, however, with interest, as one after
er paused with its precious freight of human
then started off again towards the place whither
s bound. Through the open windows the faces
be seen of young and old, men and women, and
children, and though we have become so accus-
l to it, that it has ceased to be a wonder, I was
c as I looked on at the beautiful precision with
ı the engine coursed along the rails, either taking
raight line or the curve as the pilot directed, and
with ease the whole line of carriages after it.

was profitable to think of the value that thing of
: had become under the instructed hand of man,
ıow all its mighty energy was made subservient
ıseful purpose by means of *a series of links*, con-
ıg all the force and scientific skill centred in itself
every separate truck or compartment hooked on

to it. And I was to have this more thoroughly illustrated.

Another whistle sounded, shrill and piercing, which specially seemed to cry, "Clear the way," and almost immediately an engine came in sight and swept on at full speed. Did it make more noise than its predecessors because it was charged with a heavier or more important train? Nothing of the kind. Its boilers were brightly burnished, its fires were carefully tended, its driver and stoker were at their posts, but it conveyed nothing except itself. It was "*detached!*"

What a picture did this "detached" engine bring before me! That of a lonely Christian, polished and capable and busy, but *not sufficiently linked with others* to be as useful as God intended her to be. Living, perhaps, in a wide house, with servants to keep everything bright and comfortable, but living too much in isolation; failing to illustrate in her daily life the inspired sketch of the woman "well reported of for good works" (1 Tim. v. 10); her intellectual faculties with all their energies—her spiritual gifts, with all their capacities—her domestic machinery, with all its appliances—having too strong a tendency towards the unsatisfactory result of providing for and ministering to her own single self.

My short journey on that day took me to a pleasant park, in which the flowers, though the bloom was then late in autumn, were still bright; and I came upon a

bevy of girls, who were chasing each other in the paths and on the green sward, and evidently enjoying a morning's holiday with great glee. Their dress at once bespoke them as belonging to an orphan school, and as I saw them cluster lovingly round the governess in charge, I thought how much happier was her lot than that of the rich unoccupied heiress, who has no little hands to clasp within her own, who is guiding no little feet into the way of peace. The lesson of the railway station was here enforced upon my mind; and though it came in simple form, I felt a word had been given to pass on to those who will accept it.

Dear friends, should we not learn more and more that the Christ-like life is a life of *service*, and that the Lord, who "setteth the solitary in families," never intends His children to go along their journey after a "detached" fashion? From Himself we must receive living power—the energising, propelling power of the Holy Ghost—to "set us in the way of His steps," and to Himself we must look for guidance in the right exercise of the power bestowed.

In daily waiting upon GOD, with the honest inquiry, "Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?" our eyes will be opened to see the countless things, hitherto overlooked, that are at a dead stand *from want of the little link that Christian love could supply;* and, better still, each true-hearted disciple shall discern those *made ready for herself.* Possession will be then felt to be responsibility, and abundance the call to liberality. For everything with which the handmaids of the Lord are dowered, there is a correspond-

ing demand. In many cases there is no fear of isolation, for the ties of motherhood and kindred require the healthy exercise of every faculty and gift. But where it is otherwise the duty is not less pressing.

There are orphans to fill up the gaps in well furnished but desolate homes; there are widow needing the money which fills an ample purse; there are "strangers" to be entertained at the hospitab board; there are saints, sick and suffering, to share tl pleasant drive; there are poor ones to be sought o and comforted, ignorant ones to be taught in the w of life. And the portrait (to which we have referre of what a Christian woman should be, remains f all time as drawn, under the teaching of the Spi by an Apostle's hand:

"If she have BROUGHT UP CHILDREN.
If she have LODGED STRANGERS.
If she have WASHED THE SAINTS' FEET.
If she have RELIEVED THE AFFLICTED.
If she have DILIGENTLY FOLLOWED EVERY GOOD WORK."

The Lord direct our hearts and ways along th lines of service! May none of us make *self* the cen of comfort and convenience, but multiply, as opp tunity is given, the links which attach us to othe so that we may go forward, not with the empty n of a self-important uselessness, but with the so course of a life steadied and balanced, because of precious burden which, for Christ's sake, we are b ing with us right onward to the City of Habitatio

"*I will bless* thee, and thou *shalt be a blessing*,

'er GOD'S order. First to receive from His full ınd, and then to minister. And when the Great ɜrminus is reached—our little day of service on ırth over—even then "the links" remain; souls in e glory will not be "detached" from the associations yore, for the Spirit's message comes down from the ırone concerning the blessed dead—"They rest from eir labours, and their works *do follow* them."

XIV.

Drawn to Shore.

A LESSON LEARNED IN A FISHING COVE.

"At Thy word I will let down the net."

"*DRAWN TO SHORE.*"

A LESSON LEARNED IN A FISHING COVE.

"The year is swiftly waning;
The summer days are past;
And life, brief life, is speeding,
The end is nearing fast."

was just at harvest-time. The full shear of grass d fallen beneath the scythe, and the golden ears were erywhere yielding themselves to the sickle. The weet wild rose had had its day, and the blossom of ne honeysuckle was growing scarce; but the luxuri- nt green of the fern leaves, amongst the yet brilliant heather, refreshed and gladdened the traveller. The ripe strawberry could no longer be found in the hedges, but blackberries and nuts were beginning to invite the children's quest, and rosy apples made the orchards look bright and pleasant. A few ploughed fields told of the eye of the husbandman, directed even then towards another season of sowing; but the general aspect of the country bespoke fruit-bearing and reap- ing. The foliage was particularly full and fresh; the streams running through the woods or beside them seemed everywhere to make them glad, and there was plenty of tender grass on which the flocks could feed without stint. The richly stored earth was echoing one

of the notes in the Church's song of praise: "Tho openest Thine hand, and satisfiest the desire of ever living thing."

But what of "the great and wide sea," that wa spread out before us? We were thoroughly enjoyin its freshness, its broad expanse, its deep blue, th murmur of its waters; had it not, beside this, some thing to contribute towards the general joy of harvest We shall soon see, if we will patiently wait an watch.

At a certain time of tide there lay moored at oppo site sides of the little harbour, which was within eas reach of our country lodgings, two boats—we canno say "manned," for there was but *one* man in ther with a boy; and the female element so largely pr dominating, it would be more correct to describe the as—*woman*ned by a company of fishers. The ne secured in the boats, was let down in quest of salmo and any other of the finny tribe that would be foolis enough to venture within its meshes. When it wa fairly set in its place, the boats remained at rest, an the rowers had nothing to do but await in stillne the seasonable moment for their catch. At first, w looked at them from the hill above at a distance; b growing interested, determined to make our way the very spot where the treasure would be "drav to shore."

A little carriage took us pleasantly down the ste road to the landing steps, from which a boat, still mo *pleasantly*, brought us to the fishing cove, after a ro

round the point beyond, where the rocks and caverns are very fine, and worth seeing. Reaching the place before our busy sisters, we seated ourselves on a rock, and watched them, from the first sign of movement towards land.

The approach was very slow and cautious. They were hoping to bring safely in a good netful, and therefore they must not hurry, so as to entangle the net; they must not shake it carelessly, so as to frighten away its yet unsecured prey; but with gentle strokes move on almost imperceptibly. The thing, however, could only be half done in the boats. When they were brought to the desired points, and fastened with a strong cable, then the real work began. The six women, clad in Welsh serge and flannel, their feet shod with wooden shoes, immediately landed, and five of them took to the water without a moment's hesitation. Standing in a row, one behind the other, and laying hold of the cord at the edge of the net, they drew it towards them, thus bringing it, portion by portion, to the shore, whilst the youngest, a mere girl, received the part that was drawn in, with much dexterity throwing aside bits of branches, &c., and helped the man, who remained on board, to arrange it neatly at the bottom of the boat. The lad made himself useful here and there as he was wanted.

When a certain portion had been drawn in from one extremity, they began at the other end, until the centre of the net—the part which had lain in the deepest water—was alone left. Now came the critical moment, for on the contents of this, and its successful drawing

in, depended the reward of their long day's labour and patience.

All but two stood aside, and these two women no longer stood but *knelt*. They were evidently the most experienced, and possibly the most interested, fishers among the little company; and in order to do the most important work in the best way, they did it on their knees. Our sympathies rose as they addressed themselves to their task with breathless earnestness—would there be any fish to reward them, or would there not?

Gradually the treasure came in sight—a flash of silver light appeared as a fair salmon leaped in the snare, yet unconscious of its nearness to capture; and then another and another, till the whole gathering of various kinds, instinct with life and wondrous agility, was before us on the shore, giving some illustration of the harvest of the sea, "wherein," we are told, "are things creeping innumerable, both small and great beasts." It was not a large catch, but it seemed to give much joy to those toilworn women. The choicest among the fishes, the few that would fetch a good price, were tenderly, almost affectionately, secured in their aprons; the others were gathered in on the beach and met with ready purchasers at once.

The lessons taught by this simple scene are very near the surface, and almost dropping, as it were, from the lips of our Master. "Follow Me," were His own words to those whose calling it had been to cast nets into the sea, "and I will make you to become *fishers of men*." There is, then, a spiritual kind of fishing, to which, in many particulars, the work of the humblest

ordinary fisher points. Let us try to gather some of the plainest for our instruction.

I. FISHING implies a "*going out*," or "*going forth*." This was the first thought suggested to my own mind. Those who remain at home in their easy chairs do not catch fish; neither do those who are very busy in their home life, but never look beyond it. In saying this, no slight need be cast upon home-work. There are souls close beside us to be cared for and watched, and happy is she who is wise to win them; but the idea of "fishing" takes us from our own doors far out into the depths. The nets may be, yes! *must* be prepared at home; but "the streets and lanes" of the city, the "highways and hedges" of the country, the "uttermost parts of the earth," are the places to which they must be carried forth. The Lord's call to "go into *all the world*, and preach the Gospel to *every creature*," how, alas! it has been trifled with, and yet what a glorious chance the wide range of the fishing ground gives for every one to have a share in the catch!

II. FISHING implies *co-operation*. We refer exclusively to fishing by nets, to which all the Gospel allusions refer. It wants more than one to launch and manage the boat, to let out the long stretch of net, to watch it and draw it in. There must be for every net a united band of fishers, each accepting the part allotted, each doing the very best to insure success. "I go a fishing," said Simon Peter to his six friends, who were together with him beside the sea of Tiberias, and they answered, "*We also go with thee*." They went out, it is true, with a cloud of doubt and ignorance

hanging over them into a night of failure; but in the morning Jesus stood on the shore, and, in the fresh power of resurrection life, He not only made them successful fishers, but riveted on their hearts the lesson before given.

There is a golden opportunity, dear friends, for a like compact on our parts. Many a heart is stirred in these days to say, "I go a fishing;" shall they not be cheered by the ready response, "We also shall go with thee"? A splendid chance is waiting for the nets in India, in China, in Africa, in countries nearer home, and in the dark places of our own land. It is sad to know that well-prepared nets are almost unused through *lack of helpers* to cast them forth; that boats are on the strand because they need repair; and fishers unable to ply their calling for want of means! Oh! if we say in our hearts, "We also go with thee," and say it in answer to our dear Master's charge, "Go ye therefore," which is spoken as much to *us* as to them, every mission would be abundantly reinforced with hands, and those not able to leave their homes would be diligently supplying their sisters with every needed thing, to make their going forth successful.

III. FISHING requires *patience*. Long hours generally intervene between the casting of a net and the find, and often the net has to be cast many times before it yields a return.* The patience of the fisher must also

* An incident related at one of the prayer-meetings held during the Missionary Conference, may encourage some who are called to "long patience." The two brethren sent at first by the Paris Mission into South Africa were six years without seeing any fruit. They were *alone* in a dark land, and feeling the tremendous influence of solitude, would go to

be accompanied with prudence and quietness. If the net is roughly shaken or carelessly placed it will fail of its object. In seeking after souls, what need of this patience coupled with meekness of wisdom! Many efforts, we fear, are made fruitless through hurry, and an impetuousness of spirit that cannot wait till "the hour is come." There are times when we are called to sit still in the boat while the nets are lowered, for, if disturbed before the right moment, the catch may be lost.

IV. FISHING (we speak now especially of its spiritual aspect) depends much upon *prayer*. It can only be successful when "the fisher" is also a wrestler with GOD. The closing scene in the little cove strikingly illustrated this, and it is exemplified in the history of all faithful soul-gatherers. Those who are truly working with the Master, and following Him in His *way* of working, will never go forth to anything without prayer; but there are critical moments that bring them to more earnest supplication. The last effort of capture calls for the closest work with GOD, for all Christian seekers know how curiously souls evade the influences brought to bear upon them. They seem *almost* "drawn to shore," and then they are out in the

the rocks, where an echo was given back, and call "JESUS!" to hear from nature, if not from man, the response of His dear name. One day they were praying together, and one said to the other, "I hear a voice.' They listened. It came from a black man in the field, and he was saying, 'O Lord, O Lord, I am a miserable sinner." They said nothing, but went back to their room, shut the door, and falling on each other's necks, raised the Lord, and said, "Now the work is begun." Their labour was not in vain in the Lord, and this "cry" was the first sign of a movement for which they had long waited, which resulted in the conversion of many.

depths again! Let us never forget that in ever case that "Wicked One" is against us, whose ob to "catch away" from the kingdom those wl brought to its verge; and that only the mighty of the Holy Ghost—spirit overcoming spirit prevail to make the moment of decision a p from death unto life. Down, then, on our kne we seek to draw to shore those whom our n reached!

V. FISHING implies *finding*. This is the enc ing part of our lesson. There may be alterr of disappointment, but a net properly cast in waters where fish abound, will be sure, sooner o to bring up a catch, and reward the toiling han must be so when the Master is with us in our "Cast the net," He says, "on the right side ship, and ye shall *find*." The pleased express the faces of the Welsh fisherwomen, as they s their prize, showed that "the fish caught" made forget their dripping garments, and the long pul had had to secure them; and what will all our l seem when the souls for whom we have watch prayed are really gathered in, and presented fa before Christ's presence with exceeding joy! Lord would have us to be *hopeful* fishers, cheere this expectation of "finding"—hopeful, becau souls we are going after are those He came t and to save; hopeful, because all the depths are hand; hopeful, because at His word we let do net.

As year after year runs its course, we shou

Have we been good "fishers" for our Lord, or have we allowed others to go without us to the *hardships* (as we think), and without us to the reward? Loss of opportunity, we must remind ourselves, will always be loss of blessing, and none can neglect a precept without missing a corresponding promise. Oh, let us be at all times in the boat with Jesus and His disciples, doing our little with earnest hearts towards the great ingathering of the Gospel net, and waiting in joyful hope for the Day which is coming, when before men and angels, and the Lord of all, it shall be "drawn to shore!".

XV.

The Mail on the Waters.

"The blessing of him that was ready to perish came upon me."

THE WAIL ON THE WATERS.

A LESSON FROM A CRY FOR HELP.

"Whither, oh, whither? With blindfolded eyes,
Down a wild torrent under stormy skies,
A gulf between two dark eternities—
Drifting, they know not where!"

VESSEL, well filled with passengers, was prosperously
suing her voyage. Those who have crossed the ocean
ı easily picture the ordinary characteristics of life
board ship; some are writing, some are reading,
ne are chatting, some are resting.

Suddenly there is an interruption. The cry is
nded, "A MAN OVERBOARD," and this cry is fol-
ed by the captain's prompt order to man the
-boat. The sailors bestir themselves without a
ment's delay, and when the voice of the com-
nder calls to them again—"Ready, men?" the
wer is clear and resolute—"Ay, ready."

But, ere the first splash of the oar falls upon the
es, another sound is heard,—*it is the wail of the*
wning lad. Intense in its anguish and in its strong
eal, it pierces every ear and thrills every heart,
we are told that *the silence* that followed on board
something indescribable.

The captain called out, "Cheer up, my lad, we're

coming," but no other syllables were uttered. T passengers, one and all, appeared to be held still by invisible power, which just kept each straining th eyes, as if to be the first to see the deliverance of t lost.

The life-boat was boarded by a few brave marine the oars were plied by a few trusty hands, but ev soul on board that ship went out to sea with them spirit after the drowning man. The life and death a fellow-being were in the balance; they saw it, a the true instincts of humanity rose above every oth feeling, and united that company of people, differi in many other ways, in one silent, anxious, lovi watch for the rescue.

The lad was saved. One pair of strong arms dr him out of the briny deep, but a hundred hearts w stretched out to welcome him as alive from the dea

Has not this simple incident, dear Christian frien a lesson for us? There comes across life's ocean, which, as voyagers, we are all sailing, a sound n from one, but from many—"Lost! lost!" Sor perishing for lack of knowledge, perish in unco sciousness; but thousands are crying out for he Their hands are, as it were, lifted up imploring above the waves in which they are sinking, and feeble wail reaches our ears continually.

We are, it may be, buying or selling, or busyi ourselves with earthly conveniences and comforts, perhaps, enjoying some spiritual refreshment one w another. The cry still echoes on—"Lost! lost!"

comes up from unvisited hamlets and cottage homes in our own land; it steals out from the dark haunts of our crowded streets; it is borne to us from lands afar off; and with it, fresh repeated by the Spirit, the Master's charge to *go forth and save the lost.*

What is the effect upon our hearts? Do we hear that cry coldly, carelessly, as a thing we have become accustomed to, and just go on as usual with our own pursuits? Dear friends, let us ask the Saviour of the lost to awaken us to the wail of the perishing. What a telling power would there be in the Missions of the Church if it were moved as one man to go forth to the rescue! We say, "We want labourers." It is true—and money, and influence, and time. Yes! all the gifts are wanted in the great work; but most of all we need to have *our hearts* stirred—to know more of the thrill of anxiety and sympathy, which would arrest us in our busy, and often sadly selfish lives, and bring us to *a silence* for the sake of souls—not an inactive stillness, but one in which there shall be travailings of desire, strainings of eye, wrestlings in prayer, consecration and concentration of every purpose and power till we see the salvation of the Lord.

It should be true of all the ship's company that sail with Jesus, that, while some go forth, as the brave sailors in the life-boat, there is not one but follows them in spirit, listening for the first tidings of rescue—ready with warm welcomes for the souls brought safe to land. But if it is to be so, we must rouse us from our easy chairs and our writing-desks, from our conservatories and pleasant country-seats and

luxuriously-furnished town houses, to help to man the life-boat. We must hear the wail of the perishing when we enter the fashionable shop and are tempted with the expensive dress; we must think of it when inclined to fritter away the time and opportunities GOD has given us. We must listen when we think of spreading our tables with costly dishes, and inviting our friends to sumptuous entertainments.*

Oh! let us never forget that it is "OUR LORD'S MONEY" we spend, and that everything we are and have is received in stewardship from Him (See Matt. XXV. 18, and verse 27, noting the words "my," "mine own"), and ask for grace to consider Jesus in every plan and purchase we make. When Christmas comes—the time of feasting and gifts—let us be munificent for Jesus. In all our social cheer and friendly hospitality, let there be *the remembrance of the perishing;* let us feelingly hear the wail that enters into

* It is sad to be obliged to believe that—not to say anything of the world—the superfluous expenditure of Christians would turn all the offerings of silver into gold and richly furnish the treasury of GOD. The cost of a single dress would, in some cases, go far to pay the passage of a missionary to Africa or India, and self-denial in our feasts would bring in wealth of which we have little idea. To give but one instance: A friend, who was led to see more strongly than before the claims of GOD upon His people's substance, told me that he had been in the habit from time to time of dining out amongst Christians. Often as he thought of the simplicity of Him whose name we bear, and the need of money for the cause of the Gospel, had he been pained with the lavish and luxurious bill of fare; but one day his host admitted that the bouquet of flowers, which graced the centre of the table, cost no less a sum than *three guineas!* and all was on a proportionate scale. A still small voice within convinced him that, from that time forth, he had better abstain from participation in such extravagance, and consequently he declined many invitations he had been wont to accept.

the heart of our Divine Captain, and with Him watch and work for souls as we have never done before. It will not curtail our home pleasures, but deepen them; and more—it will prepare for us fresh and abiding joys in the Home to which we are all hastening—the desired haven into which Jesus is gathering one after another, the brother, the sister, who "*was* lost, but is found," and who, if we have stretched out a helping hand to them, will be ready to receive us, when we fail, into everlasting habitations.

XVI.

That for which also I am Apprehended.

A LESSON LEARNED IN A MOUNTAIN CLIMB.

"Whither the Forerunner is for us entered."

"*THAT FOR WHICH ALSO I AM APPREHENDED.*"

A LESSON LEARNED IN A MOUNTAIN CLIMB.

ıo knows not the power of sympathy, exercised by stronger over the weaker, in encouraging efforts ich would otherwise have been unattempted? See ; mother, as she stands opposite her timid babe, :koning and enticing it to venture upon the first ;p. See the man of science drawing on the young ident from problem to problem, till he brings him ;e to face with one more difficult than any he has therto touched, and then helps him over it. See the perienced officer cheering on the sailor lad, as he ounts aloft, and learns the early lessons of navigation d discipline, calling forth his abilities and courage making demands upon them.

"I follow after, if that I may apprehend *that for ich also I am apprehended*," has, in each of these ;es, some little illustration. The child, the student, ; sailor boy "follow after," attempting something on ich they would never have ventured, but for the ractive force of the higher will, drawing them on, prehending for them what they themselves now try

to apprehend; while all but faintly shadow forth the great truth to which these familiar words point.

In a very happy way this was one day made clear to me, and I give the simple illustration of it, with a desire that it may speak a word of cheer to some weary climber, who has got upon a toilsome piece of rugged ground which it seems hard to mount.

Early on a bright summer morning, when staying in the neighbourhood, I started with my son to visit Preselly Top, the highest spot in Pembrokeshire. We had about ten miles of drive to begin with, up and down hills and over moors, before the foot of the mountain was reached.

The guide-books tell us that the summit is within 1800 feet above sea level; not, therefore, majestic in its proportions, but so situated as the one solitary height in a wide range of country that the view it commands is singularly extensive. Leaving our little carriage at a very rustic hostelry, we soon got into the fascination of the climb, which all understand who have experienced it. Passing through the *débris* and over the ridges of a slate quarry, in a sheltered part of which we had rested to take refreshment, each ascending step brought us into purer air and freer pastures. Blocks of granite, looking like aged sentinels on the hillside, were in the places they have doubtless occupied for centuries; heather and herbage were interspersed with gorse and wild flowers, and streams ran hither and thither across the traveller's path. It was very delightful to feel getting higher and higher, and

we steadily kept our eyes upon the point to be reached.

There were two peaks, but the lower one only being at first visible, we thought, as we saw it before us, that this was much nearer than we imagined, and that we should quickly reach it. As soon, however, as we had ascended its side, and stood on the top of the little cone, we saw rising above us the higher peak, the real summit of the mountain, and, though the view from the height we had gained was extensive, we were sure that much more was beyond. But it seemed tantalisingly far off!

I was at this crisis sufficiently tired to hesitate about going farther, and, at all events, in order not to impede the stronger walking powers of my companion, decided to halt where I was, whilst he made for the summit; promising to climb on as far as I could and meet him, after a bit of rest.

"*I think you will reach the top, mother,*" was his cheery, parting word.

My own thoughts were far below this mark when I slowly resumed the winding upward path, and found it not nearly so pleasant to be a solitary climber. Besides which I made some mistakes, and got into one bit of boggy ground, and another of prickly brake, astonishing the sheep who are "monarchs" here "of all they survey," by my unexpected presence among them. But it was not long before a considerable distance was thus surmounted; the mountain air was most inspiriting; and then desire grew to fulfil the expectation that had been expressed. This kindled

a fresh energy, which quickened my steps and brought me soon within sight of the last foot of ground.

Hidden by a wall for a moment, my fellow-traveller was unaware of my near approach, but as he came on the open ground, he saw me, and it was such a delight to meet. I *had apprehended* that FOR WHICH I *was apprehended*, and the pleasure of my having accomplished the climb was reciprocal. Nor only this; at the moment of meeting I was still within a few yards of the summit, and that little space hid from me the glory of the view. I had to stand upon the *very top*, where he had been for half-an-hour already, to see it all, and these few steps we took together.

Those who have ascended mountains of greater and lesser altitude, know the magical result of *the last few steps*. You have toiled on and on, and as each several stage has been reached, the prospect has widened, but oh! that "other side," which the bit of rock, no higher than yourself, entirely hides from you. You must plant your foot on the summit before you can see its unrevealed beauties; and then, with a clear atmosphere and sunny sky, what can be a richer treat than to gaze out upon the expanse, which, in the varied features of valley, hill, river, and sea; or lake, moorland, and snowy peak—all the handiwork of God—lies below you!

In this particular instance, I will only say that we were well repaid for any trouble in the climb, for, though not high in comparison with other heights, Preselly Top is, as already indicated, so situated as to command an uninterrupted view on all sides, as far as

the eye can reach, and we had exactly the light that showed off everything to the best advantage. A dark belt of clouds (according to the measurement of the eye, about twenty feet above the horizon), seemed to give additional clearness to the blue sky below, and brought out every creek, and village, and field in striking distinctness. The lights and shadows were particularly lovely, and made us think of Bickersteth's beautiful hymn—

"Our years are like the shadows
On sunny hills that lie,
Or grasses in the meadows
That blossom but to die.
A sleep, a dream, a story,
By strangers quickly told;
An unremaining glory
Of things that soon are old.

"O Thou, who canst not slumber,
Whose light grows never pale,
Teach us aright to number
Our years before they fail.
On us Thy mercy lighten,
On us Thy goodness rest,
And let Thy Spirit brighten
The hearts Thyself hast blessed."

Our brief stay upon the top and our homeward journey were very pleasant; but to digress any further would be to put *the lesson* of the climb out of sight, and this shall engage our few closing words.

Weak, and often faithless and faint-hearted, though won by the Lord Jesus to Himself, how often are we

tempted to be discouraged because of the way. "It is so difficult," we think, "to be always climbing." The Voice comes down to us which says: "Add to your faith, virtue; and to virtue, knowledge; and to knowledge, temperance; and to temperance, patience; and to patience, godliness; and to godliness, brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness, charity." And it speaks again, "If ye then be risen with Christ, *seek those things that are above*, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God." How can such feeble ones as we are enter upon this "higher life"? How can we, step by step, attain the summit of Christian perfection?

St. Paul, dear friends, gives us an answer by telling us just what he himself did in his particularly arduous course. It is a very simple one, and as suitable for a child in grace as for an apostle. "I *follow after*," he says, "if that I may apprehend *that for which also I am apprehended* of Christ Jesus." The grand thing that nerved him on was the realisation of his dear Saviour gone before, and *expecting* him to be able to follow. He knew that his Lord could make no mistake—i.e. expecting from him an impossibility; he knew that for every demand of Divine "apprehension" for him there was a commensurate supply of Divine strength; and so, hopefully, obediently, and humbly, St. Paul pressed on, desiring that the end which Christ proposed should be reached, and mightily helped by the consciousness that Christ *had* first apprehended him for that which he now strove to apprehend.

Ever looking up into the face of that Blessed One amid "weariness and painfulness," "in watchings and

fastings," and "deaths oft," how perseveringly he climbed, how joyfully he reached the height, and gazed out into the blessed "Henceforth" (2 Tim. vi. 7, 8) beyond.

The same courage will be ours as we enter into fellowship with the same Jesus in every step of our pilgrim path. As our Forerunner, He has gone before into the glory, and bids us follow, not "afar off," but "hard after" Him. It is one thing to propose to ourselves some great attainment of holiness and service, and aim after it, and quite another to "reach forth" unto that which He has appointed us. It is one thing to attempt a perilous climb under a painful sense of duty, goading us, as it were, onward; and it is another to mount up in a prepared and traversed path, higher and higher, regardless of difficulty because of a well-known Voice and Heart that call to us from above, "Rise up, my love, my fair one, and come away."

One of the truest tests of progress is, when all idea of *hardship* in the heavenly life is lost sight of in the more blessed thought that it is a going after Christ. "I do not feel one atom older," writes one, "than I did at three-and-twenty. Nay, to tell all the truth, I feel a good deal younger. For then, I only felt that a man had '*to take up his cross*,' whereas now I feel that a man has to '*follow Him*.' That makes an unspeakable difference."

All the real difficulties of Christian life arise from "*apartness from*" Jesus (John xv. 5); for it is ever

blessedly true, "I can do"—*i.e., am equal to*—"all things THROUGH CHRIST which strengtheneth me." To know that He is longing to get us to the mountain-top and show us the glory (John xvii. 24), will marvellously help us over the steep ground that lies between, and the secret converse of sympathy between His Spirit and our spirit will greatly shorten the distance till, "the little while" over, He will appear to our joy from behind the dividing wall of cloud, and our last few upward steps shall be taken in company with Him "face to face." Our eyes shall then "see the King in His beauty; they shall behold the land that is very far off;" and Rutherford's words will be thoroughly endorsed by every one who reaches the summit:

> "It were a well-spent journey,
> Though seven deaths lay between."

XVII.

A Lesson of Ministry.

LEARNED AT THE SEA-SIDE.

"As every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same."

A LESSON OF MINISTRY.

LEARNED FROM A ROCK.

ıG on the brow of a ferny cliff, which sloped down to the sea, at the base of which was a large ı rock, I watched an illustration of this well- a Scripture motto. The rock rose a few feet the strand, and was of a jagged description, ling rather broadly in its dimensions. On the 'as a cavity capable of holding a good deal of The filling of this basin struck me. Without ı of its own (as will be readily seen) of drawing en a single drop from the abundance around, it ept well supplied with water.

low tide it stood alone, unministered to, apart the blue ocean with its fathomless treasures of , but as the flood rose, the busy waves began to ne work for the neighbour rock, and took upon elves the task of replenishing the miniature sea ı surface. Not one, but several of them leaped ɔ rugged sides, throwing in as well as they could le contribution—some a good splash at a time, only a toss of spray.

Back they went each moment to their nat
they exhausted their resources and their imp
gathering strength and fresh supply, back t
again, and cheerily slipped up the rock
with more water for the now fast filling l
was pretty to see it gradually rise to the
wave after wave came near; and then, fo
when the flow reached its height, sea, and
rocky basin, all become as one in the embr
great ocean.

And it seemed to me like our ministr
to another here, and to picture the bles
that would follow patience and faithfulne
labours of love. If we are, as streamlets,
contact and close fellowship with the Fou
shall often find placed within our reach pa
empty hearts, to whom we may become th
of the living water. It may be that we
approach them up a rugged incline, and that
little, we can pour in the drops of instru
blessing. But patient continuance in the
Jesus gives will succeed, and the day will c
the minister and *the ministered unto* shall l
together, and separating circumstances be fo
the higher fellowship to which the rising tid
and glory shall lift us, for ever to rejoice in
ing love of GOD.

SHINE TOGETHER.

Psalm xxxiv. 3; Isaiah lii. 8; Acts ii. 44–47.

SHINE TOGETHER! sons of light,
If ye'd pierce the gloom of night
With a radiance clear and bright.

From those clustered hosts apart,—
What were *one star* in the dark,
With its tiny silver spark?

'Tis the grouping, side by side,
Light's fair union, far and wide.
Star with shining star allied,—

'Tis the silent, sweet consent
Of the rays together blent,
In the glorious firmament,—

That makes night so full of song,
And with light serene and strong
Cheers the traveller along.

.

"Ye," says Jesus, to His own,
"Shall in this dark world be known,
By the light upon it thrown."

But if ye would truly shine,
And fulfil th' appointed sign,*
In sweet fellowship combine.

Severed from the bright array,
Feeble is each lonely ray;
Many make the shining way.

* John xiii. 35, xvii. 20, 21.

Shine TOGETHER! sons of light,
If ye'd pierce the gloom of night
With a radiance clear and bright.

Oh, arise with one accord!
Show the glory of your Lord;
One in spirit, one in word.

Watching till the break of day,—
Guide the souls that blindly stray
Unto Christ, the Living Way.

.

Holy Ghost! the power is Thine;
With an impulse all Divine
Make Thy saints TOGETHER shine!*

* Among the "Requests" sent to be remembered before the Lord by a little band of praying sisters, one had the following burden:—That the Holy Spirit may be so poured out upon the Church, as to lead to "searchings of heart" *because of the divisions of Reuben:* and that the result may be,—more *united* testimony. The writer adds, "I once heard the sainted M'Cheyne say, 'SHINE TOGETHER! oh! shine *together!* or your little light, like the stars in the Milky Way, will never be seen in this dark world. Oh! shine *together!*"

XVIII.

"Pillars" and "Psalteries."

A LESSON LEARNED AFTER A HOLIDAY.

"The works of the Lord are great, sought out of all them that have pleasure therein."

"PILLARS" AND "PSALTERIES."

A LESSON LEARNED AFTER A HOLIDAY.

"The navy also of Hiram, that brought gold from Ophir, brought in . . . great plenty of almug trees. And the king made of the almug trees *pillars* for the house of the Lord, and for the king's house, harps also and *psalteries* for singers: there came no such almug trees, nor were seen unto this day."—1 KINGS X. 11, 12.

IT is not wise to be over-fanciful, and especially when Holy Scripture is dealt with, and yet, on the other hand, we need not miss the luxury of finding a lesson of close application to personal circumstances where we little expect it; a lesson, it may be, as in parable, but full of meaning and rich in instruction.

Soon after returning from a summer's visit to the country, the passage quoted above seemed to bear a special message of this kind, and as it was engraven on my own heart (I trust profitably), I venture to pass it on to others.

Among the precious as well as pleasant things, which many of us have been permitted to enjoy in rural scenes, and of which we have carried away a lasting remembrance, none, perhaps, have left a deeper impression than "the trees of GOD." Whether we have seen them in the pine-crowned slopes of Switzerland,

with snowy mountains towering above, in forests where the giant branches spread out in rich luxuriance, or in spots nearer home, where the river runs through wooded glades, interspersed with the greenest of green pastures —eye and heart have been refreshed with their beauty and coolness. How truly Scripture language describes them as "full of sap." The plentiful rains sustain their summer verdure, keeping off the withering influences of sun and storm; and it has been delightful to rest under their shadow, and look up to Him who has made them to rejoice and wave before Him in praise.

We do not in these far-off days even know what the almug trees were, of which Hiram sent such an acceptable present to King Solomon; they came "from Lebanon," this is all we are told, and possibly none of the trees with which we are familiar bear close resemblance to them. But the lesson of the passage need not be confined to any particular species of forest growth, having more to do with what Solomon *made of* the trees that were given him than what the trees were in themselves.

We may, indeed, take "trees" as merely a representative word, and as we think of them bring to mind their sweet surroundings—the landscape they beautify, the sea or the river above which they grow, the village green they make so pleasant, the churchyard over which they seem so tenderly to stretch, all that goes with them to make up the delight of country scenes to those who have for awhile come apart at the call of Jesus to rest.

It is a very happy thing when the mind is brought

into such a receptive state, that every impression made on it bears wholesome fruit; but experience will tell us that this is not always the case. Sometimes from want of watchfulness, or from neglect of one part of our nature, only certain faculties are in exercise, and consequently much that we pass through, or gaze at, is lost upon us. It is pitiful to see how indolently some people allow the most lovely scenes to slip away from them, and how little they are moved by the beautiful or the glorious; and, on the other hand, GOD'S works are fruitlessly used when admiration alone possesses the heart of those who travel amongst them. If our eyes have rested on scenes that have charmed them, and if we have had the highest of enjoyments in seeing all to be our Lord's handiwork, and communing with Him in all, then we want to make lasting memorials of the happy time we have had, and Solomon, the wisest amongst men, will give us a lesson.

There are two ideas connected with what *he* made of his "almug trees," which may be of useful application in this matter. First of all, he made of them *pillars* for the house of the Lord, and for his own house. Secondly, he made of them *psalteries* for singers. "Pillars" and "Psalteries"—the one indicating *strength*, the other *sweetness* and *praise*. Should we not make something similar out of our "trees"—the trees, and the scenes round them, that have been to us as a gift of refreshment from GOD?

The result of a holiday that has been really blessed should surely be an increase of *strength*, such as

"the pillars" which Solomon made illustrate. We have seen the works of the Lord and His wonders abroad, and we should trust Him more, for He is the GOD that doeth wonders among the people. Our spirits, relieved from the pressure of daily engagement, have drank in new life from many a bounteous stream, and shall we not rejoice to consecrate it all to the Lord's service in His house, and in our own homes? If we have truly gained all we ought to have gained, we shall not have come back without much added quietness of soul and steadiness of purpose, for we shall have learned lessons of our Father's *patience*, as well as greatness in the details of Creation, and seek to carry those lessons into our daily life.* Humbly following our great Example, we shall aim, patiently continuing in well-doing, to say, "My Father worketh hitherto, and I work." And we shall have missed our mark, if, in returning from our summer holiday, we are restless and fickle in the Lord's work, and fretful and discontented at home.

But again. We not only need establishment and vigour in our return to home service, but also increased *sweetness* and *praise*. Let us not forget the "psalteries" any more than the "pillars." It is good in thinking of this not to be content with praising GOD in a general way, though, however exercised, praise is good and pleasant—but to let there be a speciality in our song: *connected with* our remembrance of GOD in His works

* "Concentration of force in each act worthy of our doing," writes one, "will build the character strongly and safely in all the beauty of Christian excellence."

Doubtless upon the "psalteries and harps" which Solomon made out of his "almug trees," his father David's Psalms were sung, and he will teach us how to sing to Him who is the GOD of *the earth*, as well as the heaven. Take, for example, the 19th, and 29th, and the 104th, as illustrations of this special subject of praise, too often, perhaps, overlooked in our thanksgivings.

Thus may everything we have seen, or touched, or heard of the beautiful or the grand bear acceptable fruit. The glowing imagination, that in the dullest surroundings can bring to mind scenes of loveliness and sublimity, will fashion many a psaltery on which to make melody in the heart unto GOD; and the considering mind will turn its remembrances into "pillars" of strength. Christian character needs both; and God's works minister to both, if rightly used. They *strengthen* the heart, for they show how great our Lord is; but not this alone, they are also intended to *brighten* the life. He who has "made everything beautiful in His time," has not spread before us His "pleasant pictures" in vain, and if we would truly profit by them, we must, like Solomon, make both "pillars" and "psalteries." We must be singing Christians as well as strong ones; we must be steady workers as well as bright ones. Without "the pillar" our love of the beautiful may degenerate into mere sentiment and romance, even when it seems to form the theme of sacred song; without "the psaltery," our love of the practical will become unattractive, and unspiritual, and unlovely. Together, the concord is perfect; for strength tempered with

sweetness, and work brightened by praise—the shuttle moving all the swifter for the song—are just what we want in the service of the house of the Lord, and in our own homes. There must be no lack of well-prepared and well-consolidated *material*, diligently added to day by day in every department of Christian life and labour; but the glad and thankful heart will make *music* through all, unto the Lord. How forcibly the thought is expressed when St. Paul prays for the Colossians, that they may be "*strengthened with all might*, according to His glorious power, unto all patience and long-suffering—*with* JOYFULNESS" (Coloss. i. 11).

May the Lord teach us to know more of this happy combination, by bringing us into closer fellowship with Himself in our "going out and coming in!"

XIX.

The Rustle of the Leaf.

A LESSON FOR NOVEMBER.

"The night cometh when no man can work."

THE RUSTLE OF THE LEAF.

A LESSON FOR NOVEMBER.

"There is in souls a *sympathy with sounds*,

.

Some chord in unison with what we hear
Is touched within us, and the heart replies."

WHAT answer do we give to the sounds which follow our footsteps as we walk in the woods or beside the hedgerows in November? Those bright buddings of early spring, the tender green of which refreshed and gladdened us—those waving wreaths of foliage, so late exuberant with richer verdure of summer—the many-fashioned leaves which adorned and protected the fruit-laden boughs of autumn,—there they lie, crisp and brown, under the withering influence of wind and frost, taking their part now in the old winter music, as we get into the midst of them, or as the storm sweeps them along the ground.

In October we, in Britain, have begun to think of winter; in November it has really come. Fathers, husbands, and brothers have generally their fixed occupations, unaffected by the changes of season; what are we doing who move in woman's sphere with less stated routine?

Some, as they look up at the bare trees and cloudy sky, exclaim against the *dulness* of the dark days, and as soon as it grows cold, gather closer round the fire, and, with the last new volume from the library, or the bit of work, that will not oblige them to stir, sit at ease in their comfortable homes. They cannot go out, "it is too bleak" or "too foggy," and with dreary emphasis they will tell us they thoroughly dislike November. But as GOD has willed it that there should be a November in the year, and as He never gives us a month in which He intends us to be idle or self-indulgent, the question that most concerns us is—How can its surroundings instruct us, and its opportunities be best used by us? A listening heart may hear in the rustle of the leaf a voice that speaks both of the Past and the Future—of the end and the beginning—of a work done and a work required to be done.

The leaf of this year's summer has fulfilled its mission; it has had its day, its season is over. Bright suns shone upon it, rains watered it, winds swayed it, and it grew on into life and maturity, filling its place in the parent branch for an appointed time; that time has run out—the branch now waves without it, and sunbeams and raindrops and breezes reach it only to hasten its decay. But its fall is no proof of a fruitless mission, though it be of a *limited* one; it speaks rather of brief than of wasted opportunities, and as we think of it we call to mind many a bright and busy one, green and flourishing in the garden of the Lord, now laid to rest—the last word spoken for Jesus, the last tract

distributed, the last Bible-class taken, the last garment made for the needy, the last visit paid to the sick. In such cases the very decay only speaks of resurrection, for the wonderful process by which the Living One resolves death into life is going on, and the rustling leaf will soon be taking its part, not in the dreary sounds of winter, but in the fresh and glorious outbursts of spring. And this may be equally true of those for whom we labour.

Some years ago I walked, with my class of Sunday scholars, to a country church at some distance from the schoolroom. This walk was a great treat to the girls in fine weather, and the privilege, taken in turn, was to come close to "teacher" for a little more confidential talk than could otherwise be had. I remember well an autumn day, when an interesting girl of sixteen, who, more than any of her companions, seemed to love that opportunity, walked beside me. We came upon a mass of fallen leaves, and the many feet that lightly passed through them made them rustle audibly. I called her attention to it, and she looked up and said, very calmly and gravely, "*We all do fade as a leaf.*" The words seemed very real, but I knew not how near to that young life was their application. It was the last walk she joined in. Rapid illness of only a few days' duration loosened the silver cord, and she faded with the November leaves. How precious, then, was the good hope that all was well with her soul; how happy the memories of every effort to lead her to or instruct her about Jesus; but how solemnly did the feeling press upon me, *how much more I should*

have tried to do could I have known that such a brief day was before her, and such a short opportunity for me!

Oh, to learn this teaching of the leaf, as it speaks to us of the Past—of work accomplished, to which we can now add nothing—of opportunities departed—of souls out of reach of our influence—of labourers no more in the Harvest-field.

But there is further instruction. The voice also speaks of *work yet required.* The grave of the Past is the birthplace of the Future. Though the leaf falls, the life of the tree remains, and new developments are hidden within its storm-beaten trunk and bare branches. The old drops off, that the new may succeed. Just as many leaves will be wanted for the summer of next year as are lost from this, and the silent, but never-resting, forces of Nature are already at work preparing them. And thus, every work done tells of work *to be done*—every worker removed, of workers *to be prepared*—every opportunity vanished, of opportunities *yet to be improved.*

So, in these dark November days, when we may, without charge of indolence, sit awhile and muse "between the lights" at the home fireside, let us away with morbid day-dreaming, and gird up our minds to such practical and energetic thinking as will do us real good on this lesson, which we are to learn from the rustle of the leaf—*i.e.*, that THERE IS WORK WHICH REQUIRES TO BE DONE, some of which it is *our* duty to do. Let us each say to ourselves, "Whatever may

have been my Past, whatever leaves may hitherto have dropped away, there are, as long as life is spared, new products to be expected, and new results to be attained, through all my Christian privileges FROM ME."

Are we united to Jesus by living faith? Is there flowing into our souls from Him, without obstruction, the sap of His mighty up-springing life? Then we leave the things that are behind, and press forward *unto those that are before.* Then even of "our dead selves," as the poet says, we may make "stepping-stones to higher things." And with the solemn lesson of much that has departed from us that might have been more diligently used, we may look upon new opportunities to be entered upon, and pray for new growth, fresh life, to turn them all to profitable account.

Coming a little more to detail, we are inclined to think that, whilst we have a lack of sunshine in November, there is no lack, but rather a great abundance, of Christian opportunities. Our dull month is an admirable month for work. More may be done in home-life, for the long evenings bring families together, and with the hindrances to out-door pleasures there are more in-door occupations. How much influence may be gained by well-directed social intercourse in these seasons! There will be extra time for books, and we would deeply impress upon young Christians the importance of good solid reading, something that will bear the name of—STUDY. Scripture study, first of all; then the real *study* of standard works of History, and Science, and good literature.

There is something we cannot define in the religious life of some of our young women, that has a tendency to connect itself with ignorance of common facts and common things, and a certain kind of spirituality that is too often linked with shallowness. How will such undisciplined and unfurnished minds meet the far better-prepared foe? What companionship will there be in them for intelligent husbands, and what influence will they be able to exert in the social circle? If ever there was a day when it is incumbent upon the women who hold evangelical truth to be well read and soundly instructed, it is now. We do not suggest any attempt at mere scholarship, nor any withdrawal from the fullest consecration to GOD; but such a humble, patient, diligent acquirement of knowledge as shall exercise the noblest faculties He has given, and be faithfully used in His service.

And for those whose avocations or circumstances keep them much at home, there are plenty of calls for all that their needles or their brushes can prepare, to help in the work for the Lord amongst the poor and the lost.

Then for the active workers, November begins the great winter season of opportunity. In country places, both men and women are more readily gathered for instruction when the granaries are filled and the summer fruits gathered in; and in cities, Night-schools, Bible-classes, Mothers' Meetings are welcomed and filled. Such labours for Jesus bring a gladness which no earthly brightness can give; and though the days seem dark to idle ones and women that are at ease, the

light of GOD'S countenance shining upon the Christian worker takes all the gloom out of them, turning even the night into day.

Nor must we forget the fact, that with the beginning of winter—and of a winter of high prices especially—begins the increased need of the poor for temporal relief. The rustle of the leaf speaks to us of want in many a home—of the cheerless grate, which the Lord bids us supply with the blazing fuel—of the hungry child, that He would have us comfort with the loaf of bread—of the homeless one, to whom He would have us give shelter—of the shivering widow, to whom He charges us to carry or send the warm garment.

Dear friends, we will not talk about "dull November," but, by the grace of Him who loved us, and gave Himself for us, make it bright with deeds of kindness, pleasant by habits of industry, and productive by sowing, "not unto the flesh," over our comfortable fires, "but unto the Spirit"—in fellowship with our self-denying Lord, who went about doing good—that so "of the Spirit we may reap life everlasting." Then shall we be like "trees planted by the rivers of water, bringing forth fruit in due season; *our leaf also shall be green*, and whatsoever we do it shall prosper."

XX.

The Power of an Endless Life.

A WORD OF CHEER FOR WINTRY DAYS.

"There shall be no more death."

THE POWER OF AN ENDLESS LIFE.

A LESSON LEARNED FROM WINTER VIOLETS.

E of the sweetest qualities of the Word of GOD is *adaptiveness* to every circumstance and every need our being. The light of its truth shines not only on the great events of human life, but upon its nutest things—the food it provides strengthens the ild of GOD alike when, as a prince, he is called to estle and prevail against mighty foes, or when, as a lgrim, he patiently walks forward on his way. The oly Spirit is ever dropping into the hearts that wait r them words of heavenly comfort and counsel, which ough clothed in the familiar expressions of the Book e have learned from our cradles, come, when they are oken to us by Him, as fresh messages from "within e veil," warm with the ever-living, ever-present love GOD.

And when some grand truth is made to touch the sser things which concern us, surely it is our privilege take it as a peculiarly precious token of the tender ay in which our Father still proves that "He knoweth ur frame, and remembereth that we are dust."

It was on a day when, to my own feelings, the first

perception of the breath of winter became appa
that such a token was given. Chilled by a cold w
which swept down the loosened leaves by thousa
my thoughts instinctively turned to the signs of d
around, and to the "bondage of corruption" u
which creation is described as groaning and travai
in pain. Everything spoke of the death of Nature
the coming desolation of wintry days, and those wh
our English climate physically suffer from a lan
circulation—which seems to bring winter into c
very veins—will sympathise with the regretful
sciousness that the summer and autumn were
more quite gone! For, however accustomed
become to their ravages, death and decay are th
abnormal to our nature, and the shrinking from t
of our common humanity is one of the striking
nesses to man's immortal destiny.

> "It is not death for which we pant,
> 'Tis *life* of which our nerves are scant,
> More life and fuller that we want."

"Even we ourselves, which have the first-fruits o
Spirit, groan within ourselves, waiting for the adop
to wit, the redemption of the body."

I took up my Bible, and right down into th
pression that blighting air and falling leaves
withering blossoms caused, came these words li
sunbeam—

"THE POWER OF AN ENDLESS LIFE."

They were part of my ordinary morning readi
the 7th chapter of Hebrews, and I knew that thei

reaching application embraced the eternal glories of the Lord Jesus, and the eternal interests of every member of His redeemed; but, notwithstanding this, the Holy Spirit did not think it too grand a passage to use for ministering comfort under the wintry chill which was depressing me.

"Who is made, not after the law of a carnal commandment, but after *the power of an endless life.*" Jesus was before me not only as the great High Priest of our profession, but as the Lord of a ransomed earth, whose promise is, "Behold, I make all things new." The life that He has taken up out of death is a life of which His Church partakes, and *even now* that life is one of uninterrupted power. There is no winter in the life of Jesus. Here upon earth, as manifested in His followers, it often seems to be connected with signs of feebleness and decay, but this is really caused by the want of receiving it in its fulness. "I am come," He says, "that they might have life, and that they might have it *more abundantly;*" and this life, which is our heritage, has no intermission, it cannot wane or flicker for a single moment. However dark the days of earth, however low the pulse of health, however blighted the scenes of time, our Immanuel sits at the right hand of God in the power of an *endless* life.

Warmed and strengthened with the thought, I closed my Bible, and hastened to attend to some business which called me into the City. A fog hung over London—one of those dark fogs the influence of which

none can escape. But coming to a certain point heavy atmosphere was lightened by an unexp fragrance, which I knew to be *the breath of vi* Uncongenial as the air and every surrounding app to these sweet messengers of spring, there they in tiny bunches, filling the baskets of the flower-g and as I looked upon them, they seemed almost au to whisper back the words, "The power of an *e* life." GOD'S flowers and GOD'S Book spoke the thing.

It was another parable from Nature, for the made me remember how, all the year round, ev darkest days, some little floweret gives its token life, though suspended for awhile, is not extinct; He is working secretly, from month to mont winter as well as summer; and that still, becau the power of *endless* life which is manifest in cre energy as well as in redemptive grace, when wither, violets bloom.

I am not anxious, dear friends, to add many r tions, but what can we more earnestly crave for selves and one another than that, as the years of fade into the light of Eternity, we may know m "the power of this *endless* life," by more fello with Him who possesses it as our Surety, and wh said, "Because I live, ye shall live also"? Whi are "in the body" there will be many hindrance full experience of its blessedness. The world c in which we sojourn is a world of death, and earthly house of our tabernacle must be dissolved

"the earnest of the Spirit" already given to those who have part with Christ, insures the glorious consummation of bliss, *both in body and soul* hereafter, when in the wonderful words of 2 Cor. v., "*Mortality shall be swallowed up of life.*" Realising this amidst decay and desolation, Faith can look up from Earth's winter into the face of that Blessed One "who liveth and was dead," and get a sight of the "Everlasting spring and never-withering flowers" that abide in the sunshine of His presence.

And what can we do whilst waiting for His coming who will bring with Him all we long for, but seek to carry light into the darkness and warmth into the icy chill that surrounds us—the light of truth—the warmth of love? It is of little moment comparatively to what service any of the Lord's workers are appointed, or whether its space be the field of active labour or the couch of patient suffering, if only they learn that one secret which applies alike to all—that their life "*is hid with Christ in* GOD." There is no reason why we should ever droop, for the life we rejoice in is as omnipotent as it is perennial—we can only miss it or lack it if we keep away from Him in whom it dwells. "They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength." Apart from Him is decay and death—with Him and in Him is eternal life—and if we would give a living testimony to His name, and be living witnesses to His truth, we must constantly be under His quickening influence. His presence realised brings springtide into the soul—the hiding of His face is as winter.

We have often been reminded that the signs of life are *growth* and *fruitfulness*. May the Lord so invigorate our souls that these signs may be more manifest to the glory of His grace, and in the darkest day, when, perhaps, missing much that we have trusted in and valued, may some sweet token of His love—like the fragrance of the winter violet—steal in upon our weary spirits, to remind us that He is still near who has said, "I will *never* leave thee, nor forsake thee!"

"SINGING FOR ME."

A DEATH-BED SCENE.

The following lines were suggested by a touching incident connected with the closing hours of Dr. Arnot, thus recorded in the *Family Treasury*: "Within an hour or two of the end, he awoke from quiet sleep. The birds were singing, and he said, '*The dear birds! they seem to be singing for me.*' He was heard speaking again, but then it was not to earthly friends, and at six o'clock, with open face, he was beholding the glory of the Lord."

JUST on the border line he lay
In peaceful rest and slumber;
Then, waking up at break of day—
The last day of the number—
With heavenly gladness on before,
Because to Jesus clinging,
He listened, and he heard once more
The sound of early singing.

But two short hours and he would be
Amidst the bright harps yonder,
And glorious things would hear and see
Where seraphs praise and wonder;

Already in his soul methinks
The chimes of Heaven are ringing,
Will he not turn his ear away
When only birds are singing?

No! for the hearts that dwell above
Are quickest in discerning
The tokens of a Father's love,
Which duller minds are spurning;
And those who lie near Heaven's gate
Their upward way just winging,
Can hear the Voice for which they wait
E'en in a thrush's singing!

'Twas even so; quite near were come
The harmonies of glory,
And passing sweet the music rose
Then of "the old, old story."
But when with carol dawned the day,
The birds their welcome bringing,
Some loving watchers heard him say—
"Those birds *for me* seem singing."

Oh, happy life of childlike faith,
That makes earth sing, and heaven,
To which, amid the darkest scenes,
A secret joy is given;
Christ *here*—Christ *there*—our Saviour Friend,
Death has lost all its stinging,
And through the way, and to the end,
It ever must be singing!

XXI.

Rooted.

"Rooted and built up in Him."—*Col.* ii. 7.
"Rooted and grounded in love."—*Eph.* iii. 17.

ROOTED.

A LESSON FOR DECEMBER.

MBER, with its short days, has come again, and as ›ok around upon the scenes so lately clothed with ity and beauty, we see leafless trees and flowerless es. Here and there the faithful gorse shows its t yellow blossoms, a few daisies smile among the , and in mild, sheltered nooks it is possible to find mrose or two ; but the general character impressed ıture at this time of the year is that which looks like *death.* We watched the gay summer foliage gradually disappeared. First of all, the leaves one by one, and were scarcely missed; then a g blast came, sweeping them away in numbers, they lay thickly strewn on the ground; the rest reserved for the pitiless frost, as it stole silently the land and finished the work by nipping the clinging ones that tenaciously held on to the last. t is the meaning of this? What hidden secret beneath? Can we pierce the surface and learn ıing for our own profit of the present history of unclothed trees? Has Nature merely stripped

and left them, or is she, by one of her wondrous processes, working in them in another way?

Ah! we must dig deep down to know. I once watched the planting of a forest tree on a piece of rocky ground. It was a mere sapling, and was put there for an experiment, in the hope that, somehow or other, it would grow. But it had two great difficulties to contend with. There was very little soil between the pieces of rock to nourish it, and being in an exposed situation, the wind constantly dealt hardly with its young branches. Yet it lived and grew to a certain size. When it had attained this size, it became checked and blighted, and the upper part of the stem withered, leaving only the lower branches green, which formed a very diminutive tree. Last summer, its improvement appearing hopeless, the gardener came, with spade and pick, to remove it to a more favourable situation. He cleared away the earth and stones from the surface, and began to dig deeper down; but, to our surprise, it made no impression upon the little tree. He took a firm grasp of it, and tried to wrench it from its holding, but in vain; then he moved fragments of rock that lay near it, and what did we discover? Such a wonderful strength and extent of root clasping the solid stones and insinuated into every crevice where a bit of soil was to be found, that the man gave up and said the tree must grow there or nowhere—the uprooting would cost it its life. So we put fresh mould into the place we had opened, and left it there to battle still with its difficulties, and still to send down its

ersevering little coils of root to bring from afar the oisture that might still keep the tree alive.

That tree, stunted as it was, illustrated the wonderul energy of true life. Hindered by the circumstances f its planting from growing up into luxuriance, it had within itself the full powers of development, and those powers were put forth *beneath the ground* in an everleepening root, which, with the instinct GOD has given, seemed to strive, year after year, to reach a layer of soil from which to draw the abundant nourishment that the tree for which it laboured craved.

This *rooting* process, brought to light in such an instance as this, explains the temporary loss of leaf and blossom on so many of our trees. There must be a pause in the outer visible growth, in order that the hidden strength of life may be increased. The sap that flowed up under summer suns in flower and fruit and leaf, must for a while run back into the heart of the tree and cause it to send forth fresh fibres deeper and deeper into the moist earth, nearer and nearer to the river, firmer and firmer round the rock. If we are to have leafy branches and fruitful boughs under which we may rejoice, they must be nourished by far-spreading roots that grow down into the dark, silent depths of the earth. What then looks like death is not really so, and the season of seeming barrenness is the time of deeper growth.

Our lot is cast in days of great activity and enterprise, but if one thing strikes us more than another in every department of labour and skill, it is the aim so

to direct and utilise the forces and materials wit reach as to secure quick returns and showy resu We see more of the forcing of the hot-house than the gradual development to which sun and storm al contribute, and men seem to prefer a present success a lasting good.

Unhappily, this spirit of the age has crept i the things that are GOD'S, and on all sides we are danger of allowing ourselves to be influenced by it become superficial Christians and superficial worke Therefore the lesson of "*rooting*," taught in the W of GOD and silently set before us by the winter tre is much needed. Let us beware of slipping into t mistake of fancying that to do GOD'S work well, must employ every moment in untiring activity. could not sit down and read," said one, "when so are perishing." It is the old story: "They made keeper of the vineyards, but mine own vineyard ha I not kept." Neither let us, in feverish haste, try force those we labour for into conversion, or wh converted, to press them forward into service unp pared. That which is to endure must have a fi root, and that which is to increase must have a gro ing root.

Our Lord has told us what will become of souls hastily worked up into faith and joy. "These," says, "*have no root*, which for a while believe, and time of temptation fall away."

When the germ of the new life has, by the H Spirit's quickening power, begun to take true h upon the soul, it must be nourished in order that

may deepen and strengthen. The growth of root downwards into Christ must keep pace with the growth of profession and activity, or the fair promise of Christian health and usefulness will be blighted. And this is why we need to check ourselves in any restless, impetuous, hurried rush of soul, even in what seems to be work for GOD. We lose what we appear to gain if our outward service goes beyond our hidden spiritual life. This life, to be strong and capable of large upward growth and development, must tenaciously cling to Christ, sending down into His fulness fresh fibres of trust and demand to nourish and sustain fresh shoots of obedience and praise. "*He that eateth Me, even he shall live by Me.*" How beautifully this life of dependence is shown to be one of unceasing fruitfulness by those words spoken through Jeremiah: Blessed is the man that trusteth in the Lord, and whose hope the Lord is, for he shall be like a tree planted by the waters and *that spreadeth out her roots by the river*, and shall not see when heat cometh, but her leaf shall be green, and shall not be careful in the year of drought, *neither shall cease from yielding fruit.*" That "*spreading out* of the roots" indicates the outgoing of the heart towards Christ—the drawing near to Him in communion; the seeking Him in quietness of soul, in the secret chamber, in the ordinances of His appointment, in the gathering together of His saints. A kindred verse in the first Psalm points to the patient, prayerful study of GOD'S Word as one great means of reaching this happy state: "His delight is in the law of the Lord, and in His law doth he meditate

day and night." In His Word GOD has revealed Himself. We see the Father in the Son witnessed by the Holy Ghost in the pages of that blessed Book which GOD has not only ordained to be the instrument of the new birth, but also the nourishment by which souls grow. How important then, if we wish to be "rooted and built up in Christ," rooted and grounded in love, to keep very close to the Word! How needful to remember that it is "*all Scripture*" which is to make the man of GOD perfect, thoroughly furnished unto good works—that the Old Testament, as well as the New, reveals God in Christ; and that no part can be neglected or cursorily read without corresponding loss to the soul!

That Christian has a feeble root, however flourishing in leaf and branch, who gives little time to diligent search into, and quiet meditation upon, this faithful Word; and we tremble for the result of the gathering storm of infidelity and false reasoning upon many an active worker who finds no leisure to pause and ponder over the sayings of GOD. Oh! it is a blessed thing to study, with that far-reaching look which the Holy Spirit gives, the mind of Christ, till heart and spirit are permeated by it, and beyond the mere words of Divine truth safely lodged in the innermost soul against the day of battle, a spiritual instinct grows, which is beautifully illustrated by the words, "*Rooted* in Him."

The Lord often takes this work into His own hands in a very marked way, and, to preserve His redeemed ones in life, causes their leaves to wither, and prunes away their too exuberant branches. His chastening

ts strip them and make them bare. The desire of r eyes is taken away, the joy of their heart is gone, hey are laid aside from the pleasant activities of upon a sick-bed or in a desolate land. By such ings as these He draws forth the feelers of the soul ards Himself. It is "*rooting*" time with them now, though darkness and silence reign around, they reaching treasures of grace and love never before rehended, and finding depths in GOD which satiate y longing and prepare for an upward growth of ier strength and richer verdure and sweeter frag- e in the garden of the Lord.

)ear friends, let this then be our closing watchword he year—"ROOTED." Let us ask GOD to deepen spiritual life, to make us grow more into Christ. us desire, in this age of restless activity, to know e of the silent, secret things of GOD. The know- e will not make our souls sluggish, but the reverse. en the dew of the Lord falls upon the heart and es it cast forth its roots as Lebanon (Hosea xiv.), there will also be spreading branches and a shel- ig shadow and a reviving influence, under which k will prosper and yield fruit a hundred-fold to the se and glory of GOD.

"Into Thy silent place of prayer
Our wandering minds, Lord Jesus, call;
Dwell midst Thy own creation there,
Restoring—claiming—hallowing all."

XXII.

Keeping the Night-Watches.

"The eye of the Lord is upon them that fear Him, . . . from the beginning of the year even unto the end of the year."

"*KEEPING THE NIGHT-WATCHES.*"

A LESSON LEARNED FROM THE BETHLEHEM SHEPHERDS.

(LUKE ii. 8.)

ONGST the beautiful touches in "the old, old story" it gladdens many hearts at each returning Christmas-e, with its tale of the Holy Birth which Christmas nmemorates—one, rather hidden in the background, ll repay a few moments' closer study. We refer to *attitude of the Bethlehem shepherds*, as described in Luke's Gospel. It has been often taken, and not truly, to illustrate the reward of watching. When hers slept, these wakeful sentinels saw the heavenly ory, and heard the angels' song. But there is an-her aspect in which we may look at it.

"There were in the same country," we read, "shep-rds *abiding in* the field, keeping (as the margin says) "*night-watches* over their flock."

The portrait drawn of these men in their shepherd-aracter at the wonderful moment when the Child was rn and the Son given who was to feed His flock *like shepherd*, seems full of typical teaching and import. these Bethlehem shepherds were thus faithful to eir charge, may we not be well assured that it can-

not be less true of the Good Shepherd that HE will be found *abiding* in the field, and *keeping* the *night-watches* over the flock which He has purchased with His own blood? Interpreting the picture thus, what a cheering light proceeds from it!

"The field is the world," and for the sake of the treasure hid therein, the Lord Jesus has bought it. During this waiting time, He is gathering out and bringing back His own by means of His Word, and through His faithful and Spirit-taught servants. They often find it a difficult and weary thing to go after the lost sheep—many of them are sadly entangled in the briars of the wilderness, and many are beguiled and misled by false shepherds. But let all who labour with Christ for the recovery of the lost take comfort in the thought that, though unseen, their Saviour never leaves them to work alone. He, like the Bethlehem shepherds, is *abiding* in the field. "Lo," He says, "I am *with you* alway, even unto the end of the world."

Again; the gathered ones, the sheep brought into the fold, often become timid at the growing darkness. The devil, as a roaring lion, is going about seeking whom he may devour, or as a subtle serpent is watching to destroy; and as the shadows deepen, he seems ready to work more havoc among the little flock. Shall he be allowed to do them violence, shall the son of wickedness hurt them? They are so weak in themselves, so defenceless, so foolish. They want to keep close to the Shepherd, but sometimes when it is very dark, they lose sight of Him.

At such times, how blessed to call in mind the truth

hat our Shepherd never slumbers nor sleeps; that how-ver dark the hour, however imminent the peril, Jesus s on guard, *keeping the night-watches* over His flock! ust as when those doubting ones were tempest-tossed n the Lake of Galilee, though they knew it not till in he fourth watch He came unto them walking on the ea. Just as when He said to Peter, "Simon, Simon, atan hath desired to have you that he may sift you s wheat, *but I have prayed for thee*, that thy faith fail ot."

We know not exactly what hour in the "appointed me" is striking now; but we do know that it is still *night*." The years swiftly run their course and bear ith them tales of war, and famine, and ignorance, and n, with their dark surroundings and consequences. he "little flock, to whom it is the Father's good plea-ure to give the kingdom," are beset with dangers on very side. It is not wise to ignore that, apart from hrist, *everything* is against their safety. How is it, hen, that, as we look back, the record of our own in-vidual lives and the history of each blood-bought one, em to utter forth the syllable—"kept"? It is not a me to be careless, we are not to sleep as do others, it *to watch* and be sober. Yet what would our watch-g avail had we not the assured comfort that He, hose arm brought salvation—who was born in Beth-hem's manger, our Shepherd-King, is ever abiding ith us—HIMSELF "*keeping the night-watches*" over His eep and lambs? Nothing can escape His tender, r-seeing eye. No foe can steal in unobserved to de-roy or worry the weakest of the flock over which Jesus

watches. We are "kept by HIS power through faith unto salvation."

But does danger *never* overtake the sheep of the Lord's pasture? It does, but ONLY when they "*love to wander*," and do not "refrain their feet." There is safety always in the fold for those who lie down and rise up at the Shepherd's call. It is when defenceless ones venture out upon the enemy's ground, and feed in forbidden pastures, that they suffer loss, and bring themselves into peril.

What, then, are the lessons which the story of shepherd-life in Bethlehem—pointing us to the Divine Shepherd—may press home?

1st. Let us KEEP CLOSE to Him.

Nearness to Christ and desire of nearness are tokens of spiritual health. It is well to cultivate a habit of dependence that will not consciously move in anything without the consent of His guiding eye, and the direction of His instructing voice.

> "Lest I err, Thine aid disdaining,
> And forsake the sheltering fold,
> Heedless of Thy love constraining,
> In the strength of nature bold—
> Lord! Thy guardian Presence ever,
> Meekly kneeling, I implore;
> Now Thy grace has found me, never
> Would I wander from Thee more."

2nd. Let us TRUST Him.

Picture that Glorious One as He keeps the night watch over His weak and defenceless flock. See Him

who was dead and is alive again, exalted at the right hand of power, all things given into His hand, able to save to the uttermost, principalities and powers being made subject to Him. Should we dishonour Him by fear about a single thing? Should we give Him the smallest idea that we would venture to take the keeping of our souls into our own hands, when He is so ABLE *to keep* that which is committed to Him? Oh, to be at rest under the watch of the Lord! to be able to say, "I will both lay me down in peace and sleep, for Thou, Lord, only makest me to dwell in safety."

3rd. Let us WATCH WITH Him; saying with the bride in Canticles, though in another sense, "I sleep, but *my heart waketh.*" There is nothing contradictory in the state of soul that has trust in full exercise bringing with it perfect repose from fear or doubt, and at the same time is so drawn into fellowship with the Shepherd that the spirit of watching possesses it. "Do not I hate them, O Lord, that hate Thee, and am not I grieved with those that rise up against Thee?" The "sheep of His hand," who are truly obedient, will never parley with the enemy from whom the Shepherd is protecting them. "They will not follow a stranger, but *will flee from him*, for they know not the voice of strangers." They will walk circumspectly. They will watch for others, tenderly considering weak ones, and helping to guard them from mistake and danger, and going out to search for the lost. Such fellowship will bring delight to the Shepherd's heart! and cause the angels to rejoice. For as it was at Bethlehem,

so is it now. The "night-watches" are not without the cheer of song. "There is joy in heaven over *one* sinner that repenteth." The mother who trains her child for Jesus, and brings it to His blessed feet in childlike, yet sincere acceptance of His love—the tender woman who goes down the miry way to help back a fallen sister, and encourages her to cry, "God be merciful to me a sinner"—the teacher, who patiently sits beside the ignorant, and wins their attention to the glad tidings, which, under the Spirit's power, turns them from darkness to light—these, and such as these, watching and working with the Shepherd, waken "songs in the night" which He must love to hear.

And as the Shepherd Himself is "keeping the night-watches" *with His eye upon* THE MORNING, so they who are in sympathy with Him will be looking out for the promised day, when no longer abiding in the field where the foe lurks, "the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them to living fountains of waters, and GOD shall wipe away all tears from their eyes."

XXIII.

Even Now.

A LESSON OF TRUST.

"Jesus Christ the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever."

"*EVEN NOW.*"

A LESSON OF TRUST.

"I know, that EVEN NOW, whatsoever Thou wilt ask of God, God will give it Thee."—JOHN xi. 22.

MARTHA of Bethany, in these terse and telling words, gives us a very cheering motto for every time of need. We receive this utterance of our sister's faith with joyful thankfulness, preserved for us by GOD in all its freshness through the chequered history of the ages that have passed since she spoke it.

And we ourselves—the children of the kingdom in this generation—can go no further in any expression of confidence in the Master than Martha went, when, despite all her disappointment and pain, she said, looking up into His blessed face, "I know, that *even now*, WHATSOEVER Thou wilt ask of GOD, GOD will give it Thee."

Lazarus was really dead. The last flicker of earthly hope had vanished, for not only had the watchers by the sickbed received the parting sigh, as the spirit left the body, but the bed was tenantless. They had wrapped him in grave clothes, carried him to the tomb, and buried him out of sight. He, who had elsewhere

raised the dead, had stayed away from the family He loved at this time of sorrow, and when He reaches Bethany, it seems, to the eye of sense, just too late.

The first thought that came to the heart of Martha, as she met her Master, was, "Lord, IF Thou *hadst been* here, my brother had not died." She looked at the dark Past, and felt that it must have been different had His Presence but crossed it. But she stops not there. The faith that saw what the Lord could have done Yesterday grasps what He can do To-day, and bravely amidst her grief she adds, "I know, that *even now*, whatsoever Thou wilt ask of GOD, GOD will give it Thee."

There is a touching naturalness in the way in which the Lord Jesus at once accepts and tests Martha's faith by saying, "*Thy brother shall rise again;*" then, in her parrying off the force of His words and her own by applying them to the Future, "I know that he *shall* rise again in the resurrection *at the last day;*" and then, in His bringing her back with tender rebuke to her own "*Even now,*" by that most blessed assurance, "I AM the Resurrection and the Life," &c., &c. Martha had made no mistake when she ventured to base her confidence on that very highest of all ground—the relationship between the Father and the Son; and as we read her words we feel that, like Mary, she too must have sat at the Master's feet to have learned it. Her "*Even now*" was justified when Jesus, at the opened grave, lifted up His eyes and said, "FATHER, I thank Thee that *Thou hast heard* Me, and I knew that *Thou hearest Me* ALWAYS."

We cannot linger longer on the narrative, nor attempt further to draw out its hidden beauties, but would treasure the comfort and teaching these two simple words bespeak—"EVEN NOW." They do not mean "yesterday," or "to-morrow," but *To-day*—not last year, nor next year, but *this very moment.* They apply to every actually-existing circumstance of human life. They consider the Past under whatever conceivable form it may appear, and, pointing to an eternal "Now," take in all the Future; but their force is in *the Present.*

And see what a value this gives them. Realising, as we must, that the Past still lives, and looking forward to the Future, does not the Present (although it has been truly said to be "the least part of us") the most closely touch us, and often, because of its nearness, assume the largest dimensions in our eyes? Present need, present pain, present sorrow, how they will make us forget the joys of the Past; and, on the other hand, how present gladness and comfort will obliterate the remembrance of many a dark day! Again, though Hope is brave and bright, what power present anguish has to cloud the promise of future ease; and how sweet, if only as an earnest, is the present possession of the thing we long for! What avails it to the hungry man that he *once had* bread, and that he may have it again a *week hence?* What comfort would it be to the drowning man to know that the life-boat would be launched To-morrow?

The heart's griefs, or needs, or longings, are often gathered up in the little point of THE PRESENT, and it

cannot do without present satisfaction. The Lord, wh knoweth us altogether, has met this in His own gra cious way, and the words of Martha are just the drop pings of heavenly balm with which the Spirit stil comforts wounded and waiting souls.

How often is the Past a story of disappointment and buried hopes! Even in the best things, there is much that looks more like death than life. How many prayers remain unanswered, or apparently answered in the contrary way! "*Lord, if Thou hadst been here,*" we say—as we look back upon work that has failed or loss that has not been averted, or temptation into which we have slipped—"it would not have been thus!" It is well to muse awhile upon this, that we may be humbled and instructed, for our Past *would* have been a better Past had there been more of Christ in it.

But, dear friends, the true and wholesome lesson of the Past is to teach us to make more of the Christ of To-day, and to say with Martha, "I know, that *even now,* whatsoever Thou wilt ask of GOD, GOD will give it Thee." Every one of His servants may apply the words individually, "Even *now,*" to any sorrow or anxiety that can be committed to Jesus.

Such glorious things have been done since they were first uttered that we ought to say them with firmer faith, for at Bethany the Lord of Life and Glory walked as a pilgrim amongst men, who despised and rejected Him; and now He is exalted at the right hand of power having received of God the Father honour and glory. We look back to the Yesterday of Jesus Christ, and say

He loved us, He lived for us, He died for us and rose gain." We look forward to the "*for ever*," and rejoice n the blessed assurance that He will never leave us ıor forsake us, but will come again and receive us to Himself. But is there not sometimes a more faltering grasp of what "JESUS CHRIST" is "TO-DAY"?

And yet the Holy Ghost has unfolded to us the truth underlying Martha's confidence when He says, "Wherefore He is able to save them to the uttermost that come unto God *by* Him, SEEING *He ever liveth to make intercession* for them." Whatsoever, then, our great High Priest, the Advocate we have with the Father, asks of GOD, GOD will give it to Him.

Dear fellow-workers, it brings us to this. Whatever we ask for and receive, we may well be content to receive it, through our Master's hands. We will only desire to have *what He asks for us* of GOD. Martha does not look at the value of her own prayers, but the prevalency of His intercession. In our blindness we easily make mistakes, but Jesus can never ask amiss. Let us put everything, day by day, into His blessed hands—ourselves first, and then all our circumstances, and without a single reserve, say with Martha, "I know, that *even now*"—however unpromising things may appear—"whatsoever Thou wilt ask of GOD, GOD will give it Thee."

This "*Even now*" will make us happy, fruitful Christians, for present trust in a present Christ, as He s revealed in the Word, is what we need to enable us o do the will of GOD in the daily work GOD has given,

or in the daily suffering; and this present confidence, inwrought in the heart by the Holy Ghost, is an incorruptible seed, for it embraces a living Christ, in His Eternal unchangeableness—"the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever." Let us, as we look to Jesus, despair of nothing. The world is very evil—the Enemy will do his worst—the Church is tried by division, superstition, and shaken by infidelity—the dark places of the earth are full of the habitations of cruelty, but GOD has said to His King set upon His holy hill of Zion, "*Ask of Me*, and I shall give Thee the heathen for Thine inheritance, and the utmost parts of the earth for Thy possession." The moment, we believe, is drawing near when this promise of the Father shall be claimed, and then we shall see that much that seemed to be "unto death" shall be "for the glory of GOD, that the Son of GOD might be glorified thereby."

We wait for this blessed day of Resurrection and Victory. Meanwhile, let us "do the little we can do" in a loving, hopeful spirit, that expects great things from Jesus "*even* NOW."

XXIV.

Unto the Morning.

A LESSON OF HOPE.

"It will surely come, it will not tarry."

"UNTO THE MORNING."

A LESSON OF HOPE.

"My soul waiteth for the Lord more than they that watch for the morning" ["WHICH WATCH UNTO THE MORNING"—*mary.*].—PS. CXXX. 6.

IT was only a little while ago, in searching out this well-known verse, that my eye rested on the marginal reading; and the words seemed at once to speak with new significance, for is it not a different thing to watch *for* the morning, and to watch *unto* the morning? There may be such weariness in the long, dark hours, that watchers may sleep at their post. There may be such discouragement as the shadows deepen, that they may hopelessly say, "When shall I arise and the night be gone?" But the watchers here described are held in wakeful courage and hope by the certain anticipation before them; they sleep not, they faint not, but "watch—UNTO the morning."

Is there not a thought here for us? It is said of our Lord, "His going forth is prepared *as the morning*" (Hosea vi. 3); that is, that, as soon as His time is come, with the same absolute certainty He will appear as, in every four-and-twenty hours, daylight chases away the darkness of night. To every lesser appearing, as

our individual cases may need, we may apply these words, drink in their great consolation, and encourage one another with the sure prospect of coming joy. It is so good thus to grasp "the morning" even in the night, for we catch the spirit of that which we look for. What a beautiful description it is of the Church, "She that looketh forth *as the morning*" (Cant. vi. 10).

During my stay in Switzerland I saw the living picture of sunrise from one of the heights. I will not attempt to describe it, for it cannot be described; but one thing which must strike all who watch it, is the wondrous glow of roseate light caught by some of the snowy peaks long before the sun itself becomes visible. They are indeed crowned with glory, when the valleys still remain in darkness. So souls in communion with the Master, dwelling in the heavenly places, "shine forth and are *as the morning*" (Job xi. 17), when those lower down are enveloped in mist.

"THE MORNING COMETH!" Through the long night the promise of His appearing remains sure and true, and we will comfort one another with these words; but may GOD give us grace to be *patient* as well as hopeful, so that if it seems to tarry we may wait for it, and be of those not only that "watch," but "watch UNTO the morning."

To endeavour to make the thought practical, let us look at it under several aspects. And it seems to say to us—

I. LIVE IN PREPARATION FOR "THE MORNING." Our

ome life, our social life, our Church life, our world ife will then be ordered with reference to the coming Day. The things we do will be done as in its revealing light. We shall often test our plans and arrangements, our habits and companionships by the question, "If I realised that the Lord Jesus might come in upon me at this moment, should I do what I am now doing? Should I thus train my children, deal with my servants, talk to my friends, occupy my time?" What wonderful depth and simplicity are in the Scripture words —"Let us walk *honestly* as in the day!"

II. WORK AS WATCHING FOR "THE MORNING." How soon it may come! therefore we must be diligent. There are millions of souls yet unreached whose season of opportunity is fast running out. We cannot be idle and self-indulgent when we see so many lying in darkness and the shadow of death. If walking before GOD as children of the day, we shall see distinctly our calling to be "*light-bearers;*" and if to us the night is far spent, we shall be all the more stirred to use the little time that may be left in the service of Jesus. Nor shall we be discouraged, if our work is done in view of "the morning." All our trials as workers will soon not be worth naming, and, remembering that this is peculiarly the sowing time, we shall rejoice in the assurance that the coming Day will reveal a Harvest beyond our utmost expectations.

III. SORROW AS THOSE WHO HAVE CAUGHT THE LOW OF "THE MORNING." Oh, how terrible do our griefs look when we read them in the gloom of night!

Who can fill the vacant place in our hearts and beside our hearth? What can bring back the sweet smile, the loving companionship of dear ones, now with us no longer, who seemed to be a very part of ourselves? How, with eager minds and yearning desires for activity, can sick ones lie still under the resistless hold of disease, and suffer on through long months and years of weary pain? All is answered, and *only* answered, as we look on—"JOY COMETH *in the morning.*" We see our beloved ones safe with Him, and in Him they are still ours. He fills the empty heart with more of His own presence, and writes over every empty chair, "THEM THAT SLEEP IN JESUS WILL GOD BRING WITH HIM." And to every suffering child of His, whatever may be the nature of the suffering, the bright promise is given not only that when "the morning" cometh there shall be no more pain, but that the very pain in GOD'S glorious "afterward" shall yield the peaceable fruit of righteousness.

IV. READ GOD'S WORD AS THE BOOK OF "THE MORNING." Between the first recorded utterance of Jehovah, "*Let there be light,*" and the farewell word of Him whose countenance was as the sun shineth in its strength, "*Surely I come quickly,*" there is a wonderful accumulation of prophecy and promise pointing to the glory that is to be revealed—the "morning without clouds," that is to break upon this sin-spoiled world. If the Bride of Christ is to appear in her true character as "she *that looketh forth as the morning,*" she must be well read in her Lord's testimony on this subject.

V. INTERPRET EVENTS IN THE LIGHT OF "THE MORNING." The Christian should not be an indifferent spectator of the history of his own times. The Lord Jesus has implied this when He has bidden us look for the signs of His coming in the conflicts of nations and the state of the public mind (Luke xxi. 25, 26). Therefore, it is surely not wise for us as Christian watchers to be ignorant of what is going on in the world. We may, and I think we should, read the current news of the day and the histories of the past to help us in our watch for "the morning." If we are thoroughly persuaded that "in the morning we shall see the glory of the Lord," and that all other glory must be laid low, we shall not be deceived by the fairest promise of human ambition and progress, but with quickened eyes discover in the light which the Book of GOD sheds upon them, many a herald of "the morning" in the very complications of things around us. And more than ever we shall be rejoicing in the signs of preparation for the Lord's coming in THE FAMILY. Keeping their own place the different Church organisations with which they may be attached, the watchers for "the morning," with hearts drawn far beyond every narrow enclosure, will gather hope from the cheering tidings that reach us from our sister countries, from places in our own land, and from parts of the Continent, of the gathering of souls and the revival of believers, though be often by an agency that owns no party name. For when the Day dawns, there will be no distinction save this one—"*they that are Christ's.*"

Once more, the words seem to say to us—

VI. GIVE AS INHERITORS OF "THE MORNING;" not laying up for ourselves treasures on the earth, which is no longer our portion, but using the silver and the gold with which GOD has entrusted us, in such a way as will hereafter yield a bright return. How much lost money will be placed to the account of the Lord's stewards! How much wasted investment! how many useless purchases! When "the morning" comes, every penny that the children of GOD have laid up will be only left as fuel for the fire (2 Pet. iii. 10). Oh, let us, as the "little flock" of Jesus, "to whom it is the Father's good pleasure to give the kingdom," hear afresh His words, "*Sell that ye have, and give alms;* provide yourselves bags which wax not old, a treasure in the heavens that faileth not, where no thief approacheth, neither moth corrupteth" (Luke xii. 33).

May the blessings of "THE MORNING" be upon every dear reader! the Lord giving increased expectancy, and diligence and patience, as long as the watch-night lasts. We are looking for our Beloved Saviour to come forth as the Sun in full meridian glory, but let us not forget that He also reveals Himself as "THE BRIGHT AND MORNING STAR." When the sun shines in blazing light, all the world is awake; but only *watchers* see the "morning star." Oh, that we may be of those who catch the first sight of Jesus, because, like Mary, we have kept for Him an unwearied watch!

"Awake, Jerusalem, rejoice!
Thy night is glimmering into noon,

Zion, arise! lift up thy voice,
Thy sorrows shall be ended soon.
Sounds the deep vesper-bell of Time
Through earth's last tempest slowly borne;
For *thee* it is the matin-chime,
And to thy sons the note of Morn."

XXV.

Under the Oak.

A LESSON ON PRACTICAL CONSECRATION.

"For ye are bought with a price."

"*UNDER THE OAK.*"

A LESSON ON PRACTICAL CONSECRATION.

"All Scripture is given by inspiration of GOD, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, FOR CORRECTION."—2 TIM. iii. 16.

AMONGST the dangers besetting us on all sides in these days of eager listening, one seems to be that of not sufficiently using the Word of GOD in the way of "*correction.*" The Holy Spirit always links together privilege and precept; and doctrine becomes *discipline* to the instructed disciple. But the Enemy too well knows the power of an obedient Church to let this alone, and therefore his devices are all against it. When he cannot catch away the Word from the heart altogether, he will steal a part, and hinder the work of Christ by keeping unwatchful ones occupied with fragments of truth instead of the perfect whole; or, failing this, he will strive in some way to get the truth treated rather as a beautiful abstraction than a practical reality, having power to touch, and mould, and order the daily life and habits, which must often humble before it exalts, and destroy before it can build up.

This thought may be illustrated by a passage of Scripture forcibly brought forward at a meeting at which I was present, which suggested the subject of

our paper. Let us for a few moments explain it by turning to the scene depicted in the 35th chapter of Genesis.

GOD'S voice comes to Jacob in Shechem. He had journeyed, we read, to Succoth, and there built him a house, and made booths for his cattle; and at Shalem he had bought a parcel of a field, and pitched his tent before the city. This dangerous nearness to a people that knew not the Lord brought with it temptation and sorrow. His only daughter grievously fell; his sons stained their hands in cruel and unrighteous revenge. Jacob, in the emphatic and plain-spoken words of Holy Scripture, was "made to stink" among the inhabitants of the land. True, his altar was there, but the testimony from his home contradicted the worship at his altar; and who would believe in the GOD he professed to serve?

Then the voice sounded in his ears—"Arise!" It was the voice of Him who had met him in his distress, and cheered him with faithful promise. It called him now back to the solemn meeting-place, where Jacob pledged himself to be the Lord's servant; the place which in that season of covenant and consecration he had named BETHEL, the house of GOD. Jacob heard the call, and sick at heart of Shechem (as we may be sure he was), desired at once to obey it, and get back to the spot of holy memory, where God appeared to him and made his stony pillow bright with dreams of heaven. We note at once the change that comes over his thoughts. It is not as it was at Suc-

coth, when we only read of his building *a house* and making *booths* for his cattle. Nor as it was at Shalem, when "the parcel of ground" and "the tent" come first, and "the altar" *last.* As soon as he turns towards Bethel, "the tent" seems forgotten—we hear nothing about it—and "*the altar*" is the absorbing thought. Jacob has had closer dealings with GOD, and now GOD has the first place in his arrangements.

But, observe — however his heart yearned after Bethel, he could not rush up to it. Before a single step could be taken, a work had to be done. There were forbidden things, unholy things, and vanities to be dealt with; and as Jacob was not going back thither a solitary man, but with those GOD had given to him, he calls them together and bids them lay aside whatever was unsuited to the place of communion. "*Put away,*" he says, "*the strange gods that are among you, and be clean and change your garments:* and let us arise and go up to Bethel; and I will make there an altar unto GOD who answered me in the day of my distress, and was with me in the way which I went."

There seemed no difficulty about it. The simple story sets before us a picture of family obedience in patriarchal times. "*They gave unto Jacob,*" we read, "*all the strange gods that were in their hands, and all the earrings which were in their ears;* and Jacob hid them under the oak which was by Shechem." Each brought his or her share of the forbidden things, and they were put clean out of sight—actually buried. What an example of decided and united action! *Then* they journeyed, and GOD was with them.

Looking upon this striking story as a portion of Scripture written for our admonition, let us see how it may be profitably applied to present circumstances; and may the Lord throw His own light upon it, and enable us to open our hearts for the full shining in of this revealing light, which makes hidden things manifest!

Shall we err in saying that, after a long season of deadness and worldliness, the Lord is now very evidently calling upon His Israel to "arise, and go up to Bethel," and that there is much stirring of heart towards this higher life? But is it not also true that some are expecting to obey the call without any personal dealing with "idols" and "vanities"? It is certain that the danger to which we have already alluded exists, of apparently receiving and accepting doctrinal truth and not walking in the power of it; and a love of high-toned religious exercise and advanced teaching —which speaks much of "resurrection with Christ," and "consecration," and "sitting with Him in heavenly places"—does, in some instances, co-exist with a life more in keeping with Succoth than Bethel.

For example—to speak very plainly—what incongruity appears between the acceptance of the truth, "I am crucified with Christ, and through His Cross to the world," and the holding on to worldly fashion and vain show, engrossing trifles, self-willed ways, and a luxurious style of living! How utterly at variance is the doctrine of *present* resurrection with Jesus and the "sitting in heavenly places," and the indolence which, beginning with the early morning—when the thought

of being "risen with Christ" is not strong enough to rouse from the bed of sloth—is carried, more or less, through the day, allowing service to yield to, and be interrupted by, any natural taste, or temper, or pursuit that comes in the way. Or how do these great verities consist with carelessly-performed duties, unconquered prejudices, trifling conversation, and a satirical or unloving spirit?

We may be told that, if a full Christ is apprehended and appropriated in simple trust, these incongruities will vanish; but I think we must not forget that even this blessed truth may be pushed beyond its proportions; and as GOD in His Word has defined and detailed, if we may so speak, the life of Christ that is to be manifested in His Church, and given that Word as the great means of sanctification into the hands of the Spirit (John xvii. 17), those who would fully know the rest and the walk of faith must be diligently exercised by its close and searching teaching. Do not our inconsistencies remain with us even after we see the all-victorious power of Christ, because the light of GOD has not been admitted thoroughly to search and try *our ways?* Consequently our views of holiness are imperfect, and the "idols" and "vanities" are rather hidden, Achan-like, in the tent than buried "under the oak."

To us women the lesson seems to come with special application. Even the "strange gods" which had to be put away were brought in by the beloved Rachel; and whatever jewelled ornament was worn by men in

earlier days, the "golden earring" has, in Christian countries, been entirely relinquished to female vanity. Without calling attention away from itself, we may take it to include the "gold and pearls and costly array," in which the Lord would not have His handmaids adorned; and though some make light of the subject as a mere external, it is so connected by the Lord Himself with godly consistency, that we pause to say a few words on this one representative sin, as suggested in the scene before us.

It is not that we are to fetter one another by prescribing any particular costume, but it would be well for each to help the other to be *honest* towards the Lord's *very plain* words on this matter. "Garments" are, throughout Scripture, shown to be expressive of mind and character; and, as ever making their impression upon those with whom we mingle, it is the will of our Father that, whilst His children walk in their pilgrim way towards the land where "the white robes" await them, their dress should be sober, modest, and humble, "as becometh saints." Gay and jewelled attire is the appropriate representation of the spiritual adultery of worldliness, but not of close fellowship with Christ. There is a passage in Hosea ii. 13, which brings together, in a striking way, the two things: "*She decked herself with her earrings and her jewels,*"—there is the personal vanity; "*and she went after her lovers, and forgat Me,* saith the Lord,"—there is the spiritual adultery. The "strange god" and the "earring of gold" have an affinity, and both must be put away by the soul that would go up to Bethel.

Oh, when, dear sisters, as members of the Lord's household, hearing the voice to "come up higher," shall we rise to united consistent action, and be willing to bury our *vanities* as well as our idols "under the oak"? When will the anomaly cease of fashionable congregations? When will ministers' wives, Bible-class leaders, Sunday-school teachers, and all who in any way direct others, be more careful in this matter? Surely it especially becomes those of us who work for Jesus to keep under the body, and in simplicity of dress as well as in other things, to let our obedience be manifested unto all (Rom. xvi. 19), and to show ourselves "a pattern" which others may safely follow.

I heard not long since of a working-party, the good influence of which was seriously interfered with because the lady at the head of it in her own person so raised the standard of dress. It was not that she was gaily attired, but, having money at her command, she saw no harm in going to the full extent of the idea, "I must have everything of the best," and she accustomed herself to such expensiveness, that it became a common remark—"Mrs. —— never receives us in less than a twenty-guinea silk." The consequence was, that some in her own position scrupled to come in plainer garb, and others—especially in the middle-class—tried to dress up to her false standard. What an amount of unconscious harm is thus done in the Church of God! Oh, that rich Christians would lay it to heart, and remember that, though they may be able to afford it without apparent loss to the Lord's treasury, yet if by example they set the fashion of "costly array," they

may be tempting others to spend upon self-adornment the time, and thought, and money which should be given to GOD. Let, at least, every wealthy sister who reads this feel herself in the Lord's family one with those of more slender means, and look to it that she not only keeps clear of the fault of vanity, but also of that more plausible one of *costliness*—alike condemned by GOD—in the dress of Christian pilgrims, so that she may in nowise mislead a younger or weaker companion.

When the searching light of GOD comes in; when there is a true longing to *dwell* in Bethel; how easily such things are let go! After the gathering for prayer, preparatory to the meeting already spoken of, in which many were conscious of a very present GOD moving hearts to full surrender, a lady, who had long been an earnest worker, slipped a bracelet from off her arm as she left the room, and, giving it to a friend to be disposed of, said—"Take it. The Lord is making me feel that this is not quite the thing to wear amongst His poor." Another, not long since, touched by the words, "Whatsoever He saith unto you, do it," sent a box of jewels, with the message,—"The Lord is saying to me, 'Sell these gold ornaments for food and firing for the poor.' I send them as from one who desires to lay all at her Lord's feet."

Mere imitation of these distinct acts of obedience would be valueless; but surely they would be more frequent in the Lord's household, and would extend themselves beyond mere dress to *all* our habits and

possessions, if the Word of GOD were more strictly followed in the way of "*correction.*" There would not be so much of what one speaker aptly called "spasmodic spirituality," if the putting away for Christ's sake had its right place in our Christian ethics. The *descending* steps are not congenial to our impatient, self-willed hearts; but how often do we need to learn more of the "laying down" before there can be the mounting up! Hoarded treasures to be laid down; idols laid down; our stubborn necks bowed to take the yoke. (See Acts iv. 35; Matt. xi. 29.)

Let me mention two illustrative cases which may apply to any other idol or hindrance in the way of full consecration as well as the one spoken of.

A young lady was awakened to the consciousness of her lost condition and her need of Jesus. She trembled under the Word, became very uneasy about her soul, and longed for peace. But an idol stood in her way, and for weeks and months held her back from the surrender of her heart to Christ. That idol was *light reading.* The account she gave of herself was—"I attended a very spiritual ministry, and when I heard the preacher on Sunday, my whole soul was moved, and the light began to dawn. I came home, and because I knew where the counteracting influence lay, resolved never to open a novel again. Monday and Tuesday the books remained on the table untouched; but by Wednesday it was too much for me. I was fascinated again, and again my soul got into darkness." The friend to whom she came in great distress, said to her, "Now, GOD will not allow any compromise; the question for you to decide is, shall it be *novels* or CHRIST? One or the other must be wholly relinquished." The poor girl was too truly under the power of conviction to bear the thought of losing Christ, and GOD gave her grace in that crisis —kneeling with her friend, in an act of solemn renunciation—

once for all to give up the foolish books, and to cast herself upon Jesus. There was nothing then between her soul and peace.

Another instance, which, perhaps, in a more marked way carries out the spirit of burial "under the oak," refers to the same temptation—

The passionate love of novels, more common in women, had so strongly laid hold of a young man, that he set himself to collect a large library of these sensational works in different languages. He had them handsomely bound and placed in a richly carved mediæval bookcase, and thought to enjoy their contents in his hours of leisure. But GOD arrested him, and spoke to his heart, and he became a new creature in Christ Jesus. Then he looked at his handsome but evil books, and conscious of the hold they had upon him, said, "If I do not face this, I shall never be a bright Christian." So he asked for a fire to be made, and one by one he took the volumes down, tore them from their rich binding, and saw them perish in the flames.

Shall we not say, even if the sacrifice touch us very closely, "So let all Thine enemies perish, O Lord"? and be ready to bring out all our household gods, our most cherished secret idols, every Babylonish garment and worldly vanity, and lay them down at Jesus' feet, to be put out of sight for ever. If we thus understand the lesson of burial "under the oak," we shall also learn in a very blessed way what it is to go up to Bethel, and dwell there; for has not the Lord Jesus said, "If ye keep My commandments, ye shall abide in My love: even as I have kept My Father's commandments, and abide in His love"?

XXVI.

Looking for and Hasting Unto.

A LESSON FOR THE NEW YEAR.

"We hope for that we see not."

"LOOKING FOR AND HASTING UNTO."

A LESSON FOR THE NEW YEAR.

(2 PETER iii. 12.)

"Hope of our hearts, O Lord, appear!
Thou glorious Star of Day,
Shine forth, and chase the dreary night
With all our tears away!
No resting-place we seek on earth,
No loveliness we see;
Our eye is on the royal crown,
Prepared for us and Thee."

OUR faces are again turned Springward as the new date, to which we have been long familiarised in prospect, is entered upon in reality. It is winter still, but we are over the Solstice, and though the frost may settle upon our window-pane, and the chilling winds pierce through the crevices, we are beginning to speak of longer days and brighter hours; as travellers who have passed through the first half of a deep tunnel, think more of the light into which they are about to emerge than of the darkness which was before them at its mouth.

Will dear fellow-travellers in the journey of time, fellow-workers in the kingdom of GOD, and fellow-heirs in the hope of eternal life, accept, as a New Year's motto, the few telling words with which St.

Peter practically applies his wonderful description of the great Future—"LOOKING FOR AND HASTING UNTO."

Two pictures are before me, illustrating this motto in a very simple way. One is an Alpine scene. The ground is thickly covered with snow, which has made almost undistinguishable the fragments of rock which lie in all directions. A few bare branches are the only visible relics of what was once green and flourishing, and all is silent and desolate, for the cattle whose tinkling bells in summer enliven the mountain solitudes have been driven to the plains for food and shelter. But the place is not wholly deserted. A little Swiss châlet, shut off by the snow from all communication with its neighbours, is in the front, and seems to hold undisturbed possession of rock, and tree, and land. It is, doubtless, a beautiful spot when the bright blossoms of the rhododendron make the very stones smile, and the blue gentian and hare-bell profusely flower amongst the grass. Then the few wants of the Alpine peasant are supplied, for there is bread enough in the house, and the herds led to pasture freely yield their milk. But to-day it is far otherwise, and the tale is told in the face of the boy who stands on a knoll of ground, which rises on the right-hand side of the châlet. His attitude is that of anxious watch and expectancy; one arm is stretched out at full length, as if to attract attention, the other rests on a staff, which is firmly planted on the edge of the spot where he has fixed himself. *Perhaps* the food supply has run low, or else the

little brother is sick, whose head is resting on his mother's lap, beneath the shelter of her shawl, as she too looks out from the threshold of her frost-bound home.

The other picture is a well-known photograph. Two female figures are resting on a low seat, apparently by a battlement. The elder, worn and fragile, with a pensive, though not unhappy, expression, is musing on the Past. One arm falls rather listlessly by her side, the other is thrown round the younger, who, with bright eyes and a look of calm certainty, is gazing forward into the Future. The two together form a beautiful combination. We call them MEMORY and HOPE. Neither is satisfied with the Present, and as lovingly and unitedly they keep watch, we seem to hear them whisper the cheering words, "The morning cometh!"

Both these pictures speak somewhat in the spirit of our motto, though in a very different way. The first is the "looking for"—of hunger; the second, the "hasting unto"—of delight. Both have their realisation in the experience of the child of GOD. Do not the needs of our desert-home often send us, like the sentinel-boy, to watch for the help that we know to be at hand; and are we not hungry, not for present help alone, but for the Tree of Life which is in the midst of the Paradise of GOD? And when remembrances thicken upon us, as we think, sometimes sadly, upon the bygone years, and our hearts hear the sweet promises of the Future, how can we but long for the

coming of the Day of GOD! Memory, if it is t chastened and sanctified, must always embrace H and then every reminiscence of that which has parted, will quicken the desire for that which i to come.

"Looking for and *hasting unto.*" "The v Bishop Bloomfield says, "is well rendered by P sor Scholefield, 'hastening on.' Yet though a literal version, this seems not the *full* sense c word, which is rather 'mentally hastening aft anticipating'—a sense, indeed, communicated b preceding term—the complete sense of both ' *earnestly expecting* and ardently wishing and a *pating.*'"

We cannot now enter into details of "the b hope" to be thus enshrined in our hearts, but it is that if it be ever before us, as the consummation we long for, the whole course of life will be influ by it. And in order that it should be so, the c of that hope must be, not the things which accompany the great Revelation of Jesus Christ and glorious though they will be, but—HIMSEL

As we stand upon our watch, hungry and r we shall be stretching out our hands unto Him. for ourselves alone shall we plead, but for children, brothers, sisters, and for the multitude has bidden us to care for, many of whom are p ing for want of HIM. As we commune with be companions of the way by which He has led the wilderness, our eyes will brighten with tho

of HIM. We shall work for Him with redoubled ardour as we feel the Day is drawing near on which we shall see His face. His Word will be more precious to us as we hasten unto His appearing, because in it we hear through the Spirit the Voice which in its own accents will speak to us then.

There is a striking explanation of the cause of error in the marginal reading of Isaiah viii. 20, which, taken in connection with 2 Peter i. 19, is worthy our prayerful consideration. "To the law and the testimony," the prophet says, "if they speak not according to this Word, it is because there is *no morning* in them." Those who are overcharged with present things cannot drink in the spirit of GOD'S testimony, which, "as the light that shineth in a dark place," is radiant with the Future.

Dear friends, let it not be true of any of us that there is "*no morning*" in our hearts. Let nothing make us content with the night, let nothing lead us to be hopeless in the midst of its trials. Better the coldest experience of the shadows and storm-clouds that makes dearer the longing for the Day-Star than the most comfortable surrounding with "sparks" of earthly light, which beguile the soul with deceitful promise, and keep her away from her watch-tower.

The motto is for all the children of the Kingdom—"LOOKING FOR AND HASTING UNTO." It is only another word for "LOOKING UNTO JESUS." As surely, then, as we are now, in the revolution of the seasons, turned towards Spring, so surely in this wonderful time of

earth's history may we be ardently anticipating and doing all in reference to—"*the coming of the Day of God!*"

"When shall I arise, and the night be gone?"
I'm longing for the Day-break's first glad dawn."

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When thy tender, loving Father — Ps. ciii. 13.
Shall the last sheaf safely gather; — Matt. iii. 12.
When each kindred, people, nation, — Rev. xiv. 6.
Shall have heard Christ's great salvation; — Matt. xxiv. 14.
And each chosen sheep reposing — John x. 14–16.
In the fold whose door is closing; — Luke xiii. 25.
Then the Lord of earth and heaven, — Col. i. 15–17.
Coming at a signal given, — 1 Thess. iv. 16.
Shall say to thee, "Arise!"

When Creation's groans all ceasing, — Rom. viii. 21–23.
Earth again her Maker pleasing, — Isa. xxxv.
Flesh no longer heir to sorrow, — Rev. xxi. 4.
Waking on that promised morrow, — Ps. xvii. 15.
Newly clad in garments glorious, — 1 Cor. xv. 42–44.
With the soul shall walk harmonious, — Phil. iii. 20, 21.
And, in that blest state of being, — Rev. xx. 6.
Upward from the last shade fleeing, — Rev. xxii. 3–5.
Then, then shalt thou arise!

Farewell, my grief! The prospect, oh, how blest!
Lord, give me faith upon Thy love to rest;
A little while to wait, until my longing eyes
BEHOLD THE LAMB—then, then shall I arise!
Then shall all night be gone.

E'en now it seems as though the morning ray
From brow of everlasting hills had chased away
The deepest gloom: joy is exchanged for sighs,
As faith brings near the day when I shall rise,
And night shall all be gone!

ADDENDA.

"EVEN ME."

"Bless me, even me also, O my Father."

LORD! I hear of showers of blessing
Thou art scattering full and free;
Showers the thirsty land refreshing,
Let some droppings fall on me,
Even *me!*

Pass me not, O gracious Father!
Sinful though my heart may be;
Thou might'st spurn me—but the rather
Let Thy mercy light on me,
Even *me!*

Pass me not, O tender Saviour!
Let me love and cling to Thee—
I am longing for Thy favour.
When Thou comest, call for me,
Even *me!*

Pass me not, O mighty Spirit!
Thou canst make the blind to see;
Witnesser of Jesu's merit,
Speak the word of power to me,
Even *me!*

Have I long in sin been sleeping?
Long been slighting, grieving Thee?
Has the world my heart been keeping?
Oh forgive and rescue me,
Even *me!*

Love of GOD! so pure and changeless,
Blood of GOD! so rich and free!
Grace of GOD! so strong and boundless,
Magnify it all in me,
Even *me!*

Pass me not! "this lost one" bringing
'Tis but one more, Lord, for Thee;
All my heart to Thee is springing,
Blessing others—oh! bless *me*,
Even *me!*

THE STORY OF "EVEN ME."

MANY a time have I been asked to give some account of the origin of the hymn which has become one of the most precious links of my life with God's work and with God's children. It was simply this.

A party of young friends, over whom I was watching with anxious hope, attended a meeting in which details were given of the beginning of revival in Ireland. They came back greatly impressed. My fear was lest they should be satisfied to let their own fleece remain dry, and I pressed upon them the privilege and responsibility of getting a share in the outpoured blessing.

On the Sunday following, not being well enough to go out, I had a time of quiet communion. These children were still on my heart, and I longed to press upon them an earnest individual appeal. Without effort words seemed given to me, and they took the form of the hymn which I then wrote—

"Lord, I hear of showers of blessing."

I had no thought of sending it beyond the limits of my own circle, but, passing it on to one and another,

it became a word of power, and I then published it as a leaflet.

Of its future history I can only say the Lord took it quite out of my own hands. It was read from pulpits, circulated by tens of thousands, and blessed in a remarkable degree. Every now and then some sweet token was sent to cheer me, in a somewhat isolated life, of its influence upon souls. Now, it would be tidings from afar of a young officer dying in India, and sending home his Bible with the hymn pasted on the fly-leaf as the precious memorial of that which brought him to the Lord, and anon the story of a poor outcast gathered into the fold by the same means. The following letter received from a convert, put into my hands by Mr. Hammond of America, where it is extensively useful, is one amongst many :—

"Thank you for singing that hymn, 'Even Me,' for *it was the singing of that hymn that saved me.* I was a lost woman, a wicked mother; I have stolen and lied and been so bad to my dear little innocent children. I have no friend. I have attended your inquiry meetings, but no one came to me on account of the crowd, so I went away always wretched—lost.

"But Saturday afternoon, at the first Presbyterian Church when they all sung those beautiful words, 'Let some droppings fall on me,' and 'Blessing others, oh, bless *me*,' it seemed to reach my very soul. I thought, Jesus can accept me, '*even* me,'—a bad, wicked, passionate mother,—and it brought me to His feet, and I feel my burden of sin removed. Jesus *has* accepted 'even me.' Can you wonder that I love those words, and love to hear them sung?"

I have given on the fly-leaf the original rendering, which has, in a variety of instances, been departed from.

To some alterations I have consented, but always prefer that the words remain unchanged from the form in which at first God so richly blessed them. The most unsatisfactory omission, to my own mind, is in the English Presbyterian Hymn Book, where "*Even Me*" at the end of the verses is left out altogether—to all appearance for the sake of a tune—and, consequently, the point of the hymn in its close individual application is lost. But, feeling quite unworthy of the acceptance of words from my pen throughout the Churches, I thankfully commit them to whoever desires to use them in the service of our one blessed Master, asking only that sometimes when they are sung, a prayer may go up for the writer that many a "dropping" from the gracious showers may descend in refreshment and blessing.*

A few pieces, in addition to those interspersed through the preceding pages, written at different periods, but with no view to publication, may form an acceptable sequel to the "Lessons" learned from many teachers.

* One other hymn, not written for singing, but printed as a gospel leaflet, "Instead of Me," has had a share of the same blessing accorded to "Even Me." It may be had from Mr. Skinner, 88 Mildmay Park, London.

THE OTHER SIDE.

WHERE do I look for joy without a cloud?
For smiles without a tear? where for the loud,
Long Hallelujah in a rest that shall abide?—
Not here, but on "the other side."

Here, there are eyes that weep beside the grave;
Here, shadowing griefs that succour vainly crave;
Here, tempest-tossed, we sail against the tide:
No sorrow on "the other side."

Here, we see dimly much that we would know;
His face, "behind the lattice," Christ doth show;
But there's a sight to gladden souls long tried,
Of glory on "the other side."

There Christ unveils the brightness of His face—
There manifests the fulness of His grace;
And eye, and heart, and mind shall all be satisfied—
Not here, but on "the other side."

Then let us watch and wait in faith and hope,
We shall not long mid shadows darkly grope,
But soon rejoice, led by our faithful Guide,
In daybreak, on "the other side."

THE HIGHER LIFE.

"*Looking up,*" because I am God's child,
In my Saviour's blood all reconciled;
"*Looking up,*" because I want to know
Where my Father wills that I should go;
And my eye in earnest, loving gaze
Rests on His, that He may guide my ways.

"*Raisèd up,*" because, the conflict o'er,
He in whom I live can die no more;
"*Raisèd up,*" because my heart must be
Where my Lord is gone to plead for me;
And my life must have its spring above,
Through the power of resurrection love.

Then "*caught up,*" because I am to share
His bright glory who my sins did bear.
Yes! "*caught up*" to be in that dear Home
Where no vacancy can ever come;
And, without a veil, that face to see
Which was once so marred and worn for me!

THE GREAT TEACHER'S LESSON.

O RESTLESS ones! whom cares and doubts are vexing,
So soon disturbed, so grieved by thoughts perplexing,
There is a lesson fully worth your learning,
It brings repose for which your hearts are yearning.

Come to My feet, and, your own nature wearing,
See Me your sins, and cares, and sorrows bearing;
You trust My blood on your behalf prevailing,
Now trust *My guidance* for your need availing.

Come to My feet, and of My Spirit learning,
The path of sweetest rest you'll be discerning;
I came *to serve*, to do My Father's pleasure,
This brought to Me a joy that none can measure.

And if you would My joy and rest be sharing
As on you travel to the Home preparing,
My yoke of service you must now be choosing,
My Father's will accept, your own refusing.

Oh! is it hard the wayward flesh denying
To self, and earth and sin be daily dying?
It *seems* but hard, for through the painful striving
The soul to sweet content is still arriving.

I leave you not alone in fruitless anguish,
In fruitless struggles with the foe to languish;
No! I will *nearer* be, My hand upholding,
And to your fainting hearts My heart unfolding.

Yield but the will, and then, true peace possessing,
You'll know the gladness of My Father's blessing;
And to His perfect will each thought subduing,
Your strength in childlike trust be thus renewing.

And as still on and onward patient going,
Lighter you'll find My yoke and burden growing.
Come to My feet, then, and of Me be learning,
And take the rest for which your souls are yearning.

THE SAME SPIRITUAL MEAT AND THE SAME SPIRITUAL DRINK.

FAREWELL! when at the cup and board of earth
We cease to meet, and when the longing heart,
Yearning for sight and touch and answering word,
Is stretching forth its tendrils all in vain,
Then may this soothing thought, re-echoed back
With memory of communion sweet and near,
Refresh us and sustain! *There is a cup*
We *still* may *drink together*, and *a board*
Where the *same bread* awaits our constant need:—
Shall we not there meet often, finding thus
Our portions side by side?

"FAINT, YET PURSUING."

Written for the New Year.

"*Faint*," for the way seems dark, and rough, and long,
The hill is steep, the mountain torrent strong;
But "*yet pursuing*," for my Home in view
May well sustain me all the journey through.

"*Faint*," for the warfare presses on me sore,
And still the foe unweariedly asks more;
But "*yet pursuing*," for my Captain's near,
And certain victory removes all fear.

"*Faint*," for the work in my poor hands seems vain,
I sow the seed in tears and oft in pain;
But "*yet pursuing*," for I look on high,
And resurrection sheaves rejoice my eye.

"*Faint*," for the watching has been lone—and still
The morning shineth not upon the hill—
But "*yet pursuing*," for it comes with speed,
Earth soon shall welcome back the Light indeed.

Oh contradiction this most strange, yet true:
Tho' faint, we faint not, but our course pursue;
For He who to the faint increaseth power,
Will never leave us in the trying hour.

His arm upholds us in the weary way,
His shield protects us in the battle day,
His grace sustains us when we work His will,
His hope can cheer us—waiting, watching still.

Soon—home will make the journey's trials seem light;
In rest the soldier will forget the fight;
The work be recompensed in sure reward,
The watching by the coming of the Lord!

Oh precious hope! the hope our Jesus gives,
In Him we trust, who ever, ever lives.
We cannot faint, whilst help from Him we crave;
We must pursue, whilst He is strong to save.

A PRAYER FOR DARK DAYS.

"I will bring the blind by a way they know not."—Isa. xlii. 16.

With closéd eyes, I lay my trembling hand
In Thine, my God. I do not understand
The way Thou tak'st; but I am blest,
For in Thy perfect will my heart can rest.

Thou seest, knowest all, my Heavenly Friend!
The dark beginning and the brighter end;
And if *I* know not, cannot see—enough
That *Thou* dost guide, however steep and rough!

Give me but quiet confidence, O Lord!
To trust Thy promises, Thy faithful word;
Give me but calm assurance of Thy love;
Give me the hope with anchor fixed above.

I must not look upon the tossing wave,
I must not rest beside the grassy grave,
I must not weep o'er idols broken up,
I must not tarry by the empty cup;

But, far above the waves, hear Jesu's voice,
In resurrection victory rejoice;
Set my affection upon heavenly things,
And quench my thirst beside the living springs.

Then lead me on, my God, my faithful Guide,
Hold Thou my hand, and keep me at Thy side;
Soon shall the day break, and the shadows flee,
And then in sunshine I shall walk with Thee!

"*THE GREAT LOVE WHEREWITH HE LOVED US.*"

THERE are some words amongst God's words of blessing
On which, above the rest,
The heart may dwell; such words a charm possessing
To cheer us when distressed.

The countless gifts and mercies of Creation,
Our gratitude engage;
Wonders of power and grace in Revelation
Meet us in every page.

But oh! to read that *God* the *Lord* has LOVED us,
The Lord of Heaven above;
That He has set His mighty heart upon us
With a great, God-like Love!

That from this Love the gift which none can measure
To this poor earth came down:
That Jesus died, because of God's good pleasure,
To give to us a crown.

Oh! this, beyond all marvels most surprising,
Our admiration wins;
From such good news our faith and hope, uprising,
Begin where God begins.

If He has *loved* us, every fear must vanish,
In peace we may abide;
The children of His Love He will not banish,
But bring them to His side.

This Love ensures a wealth of endless blessing,
'Tis a "*great* Love" indeed;
Safe in its vast embrace, all Heaven possessing,
God's child can *nothing* need!

THE GOOD PILOT.

O FEAR not! though the night seem long and dreary
With tempest overhead;
His watchful care, who sleeps not, is not weary,
Is ever round us spread.

Those waves which swell and threaten to engulf us,
He holds them in His hand;
Each breath of wind that stirs its strength against us
Is raised by His command.

He is our Pilot, and His skilful guiding
Will soon be clearly seen;
Then let us trust Him, with a calm confiding,
Whatever comes between.

Unto the haven where we long to anchor,
Thither our course He steers;
We need not yield to care's corroding canker,
But cast away our fears;—

For better far than we who sail together
Knows He our distant Home;
And under Him the storm we soon shall weather,
And safe to harbour come!

"WITH YOU ALWAYS."

JESUS, loving Saviour!
In my happiest hour,
Cheer me with Thy favour,
Keep me by Thy power.
Lest, when Life is smiling,
My weak, faithless heart,
Lulled by its beguiling,
Should forget Thy smart.

Jesus, loving Saviour!
When dark sorrows lower,
Manifest Thy favour
In each troubled hour.
For, at Thine appearing,
Night is turned to day;
And, no evil fearing,
On Thine arm I stay.

Jesus, loving Saviour!
Still I would implore,
Let Thy gracious favour
Cheer my every hour.
For in days of gladness
Joy is at Thy side;
And with Thee in sadness
Calmly I abide.

PSALM CVI. 4, 5.—A PARAPHRASE.

LORD! I have craved for *good;*
My spirit in this desert-land has sighed
For wealth with which it could be satisfied,
For living streams that with it might abide.
The world had promise fair,
But substance was not there;
Oh! 'tis "Thy chosen's good"
That I would share!

And *gladness* I would know,
True gladness, that my heart might fill;
Deep, changeless joy, a hidden rill
Freshening the springs of thought and will.
But search on earth is vain,
Its mirth leaves stings of pain:
Lord! 'tis *Thy children's* joy
I would obtain!

And *good* and *gladness* given,
Then from all glory that must fade away
The pomp and triumph of a passing day,
From this may heart and hope be turned away!
Oh! 'tis not worldly glare,
Not what below seems fair,
But glory bright as Heaven
That I would share!

Then, Lord! remember me!
Remember with that wondrous love,
Which all Thy chosen people prove,
Which e'en the hardest heart can move;—
Salvation's wholly Thine,
The work of grace Divine;
With *that*, oh visit me,
And make it mine!

THE SUMMONS TO UNITED PRAYE

Written for the Week of Prayer.

The Church is called to prayer,
Go, get thee to the mount;
We want a pouring out of grace,
Fresh from the Living Fount.

We want that everywhere
Men lift up holy hands,
Doubt and contention laid aside,
Hearts joined in Christian bands.

We want that each for each
Plead with a brother's love;
And for a world in darkness steeped
Send up a cry above,

To reach the willing ears
Of that Almighty One,
Who to His waiting servants gives
Fresh trophies to be won:

Souls to be snatched from woe,
Brands plucked from out the flame,
Captives made free from Satan's yoke,
Through faith in Jesu's Name.

Come forth! Thou Breath of God,
A quickening impulse give!
And breathe upon the slain, we pray;
Breathe, and the *dead* shall *live*.

Come from the gentle South,
Come from the stirring North;
Thy garden needs reviving, Lord,
To call the spices forth.

O wrestlers! weary not,
To unbelief ne'er yield;
Our God, when most invisible,
Is near us on the field.

The hosts of darkness threaten,
The world exults in sin;
The Master seems to tarry,
But *prayer* the *day* will *win*.

We hear His loving accents,
Tender as when of old
He walked amongst the sons of men,
And drew them to His fold.

He speaks from out the glory
Radiant with priestly grace,
And bids His children boldly plead
That more may see His face.

So, let the cry go up
Earnest, united, strong;
God's Spirit shall *our answer* be,
And turn our prayer to song!

A SPRING SONG OF RESURRECTION.

O GOD! we thank Thee that amidst decay
So much rich life
Is bursting out in hedge, and field and way
With blossoms ripe,
Gladdening the hearts that mourn, the eyes that weep,
Whispering of an Eternal waking out of sleep.

We thank Thee, as each loved one goes to rest
And silent lies;
And we must fold the hands we warmly prest,
And close the eyes,—
That Thou dost sweetly cheer us in our grief and pain
By words of life, "Thy brother, sister, friend, shall rise again."

O God! we thank Thee that this joy is ours
Who Christ receive,
We thank Thee here for precious, living hours;
And we believe
That ages yet to come of fuller joy and bliss
Our portion is in Him, for "endless life" is His!

We thank Thee that for this He meekly bore
The cruel cross!
And shrank not from the dark, mysterious hour
Of pain and loss,
Counting His life not dear, laying His glory by,
That we might live—live, because *He* would *die!*

We want to thank Thee, Lord, with praises true
For life thus brought;
By yielding up, in word and deed, anew
What Christ has bought;
Come then, Almighty Spirit, hear our prayer,
Thy Breath upon the soul makes Spring-time there.

A blessèd Spring of love, and hope, and light
Thy touch can wake;
And chase away the shades of wintry night
In glad day-break.
Come, then, and quicken us this very hour;
Come in Thy wondrous Resurrection power!

CHEER FOR A TROUBLED HEART.

The anthem died away with the words, "Peace, peace!"

And may such melody be breathed e'en here,
'Mid fevered dreams and din of earthly care;
May words so sweet fall on the listening ear,
"Peace, peace!"

Is there not fear within, and sin, and woe?
Is not the conflict lingering and slow?
Can the frail heart embrace the whisper low,
"Peace, peace!"

O Saviour! King of Saints! our Captain Thou!
Who on the battle-field in fear should bow,
If 'tis Thine own kind voice that speaketh now,
"Peace, peace!"

Why should we doubt? When at His blessèd side
Faint ones had clustered 'ere He bled and died,
Did not His parting words with them abide,
"Peace, peace!"

And when, returning from the conquered grave,
A Victor mighty to redeem and save,
What was the watchword which His lips first gave?
"Peace, peace!"

Oh! may our sluggish spirits learn to rise,
Upon Thyself oh fix our longing eyes,
And may we hear the Blood which ever cries
"Peace, peace!"

.

We're struggling on, tossed on a wild sea's foam,
But hail the earnest here of rest to come—
Rest in our Father's arms, and heart, and home,
And—Peace, peace!

COMMUNION IN THE CONFLICT.

(GEN. xiv. 17–20.)

THOU great Melchisedec!
Our King and Priest Divine,
Come forth! refresh Thy fainting ones
With bread and wine;
The conflict has been sharp,
The foes combined and strong;
But Thou hast given us victory,
Put in our mouths a song.

We bring to Thee the spoils,
For all the praise is Thine,
But want from Thine own hands to take
The bread and wine;
We want to see Thy face,
To hear Thy loving voice;
We want the blessing from Thy lips,
To make our hearts rejoice.

Oh tarry not! Melchisedec,
Our King and Priest Divine;
Come forth! refresh Thy fainting ones
With bread and wine;
And then, with strength renewed,
Fresh trophies we shall win;
Prepared to do fierce battle
With Satan and with sin—

To cast the world behind us,
Howe'er its glories shine,
When we have feasted with our King
On bread and wine.

And when the fight is o'er,
The victory complete,
How sweet will be our rest with Thee,
Our worship at Thy feet!

THE CHRISTIAN'S FAREWELL TO "DOUBTING CASTLE."

DARK prison-house, farewell!
The soul that pined and wept,
In thy stern bondage kept,
Unable then to tell of Him she loved so well,
Has burst her shackles when, perchance, her keepers slept.

'Twas night. In gloomy cell
A captive, all forlorn,
Longed for the breath of morn,
When on his bosom fell a powerful, gentle spell,
It seemed to loose the chains which he so long had worn.

And then a voice so sweet
Stole on his listening ear,
He started up to hear,
New strength came to his feet the while it did repeat
Familiar words, "My child, arise! why linger here?"

"These bolts," he made reply,
"These chains, this darkness round—
How from my prison can I bound?"
One word rebuked, "'Tis I." "What! Jesus?" "Yes,
'tis I."
He leaped towards his Lord, his chains fell to the ground.

The bars relaxed their hold,
The doors flew open wide,
And at his Lord's dear side
He wept with bliss untold—bliss once more to behold
The face which from his gaze so long had seemed to hide.

.

Dark prison-house, farewell!
Thou hast strange power, 'tis said,
With souls that in thy cloisters tread;
But well I know thy gloomy bell
Shall never ring its fearful knell
At death of one poor soul whose trust on Christ is stayed!

IN MEMORIAM.

We knelt together twelve,
The aged and the young,
And with one voice we prayed one prayer
And joined in one glad song;
We took the broken bread,
We drank the outpoured wine,—
The symbols of our Saviour's death,
Tokens of love Divine.

Not as on days before
In this still hour we met,
For evening shadows gathered round,
The sun was nearly set;
And, as its parting light
Lingered, then sweetly passed,
We felt, that at the Sacred Feast
This meeting was our last!

Oh! let us look above,
Distance can never part
Those who are truly linked in one
With Christ's love in the heart.
But 'tis a tempting world,
Our feet are prone to slide,
O Saviour! keep us by Thy grace
Close to Thy pierced side.

And when the day shall come,
All glorious and bright;
When, clustered round Thy Throne on high,
Thy Church stands robed in white;
Then of that twelve who met,
The aged and the young,
Awhile in earth's communion sweet,
May there be missed—not one!

"FOR ME AND THEE."

"That take, and give unto them for Me and thee."
—MATT. xvii. 27.

AND can it then be really so,
That with a sinful child of woe
His oneness Jesus thus would show—
"For Me and thee"?

How does this mystery have place?
How can the Lord of life and grace
Take sinners in such close embrace—
"For Me and thee"?

As Simon stood at Jesu's side,
Thus wondrously with Him allied,
He knew not what the words implied—
"*For Me and thee.*"

Ah! see Him first the ransom pay,
And tread alone His suffering way;
Then hear Him sweetly, gladly say—
"*For Me and thee.*"

The thorny circlet wreathed His brow,
He bore the cross, the pain, the woe
Alone, but speaks of glory now—
"For Me *and* thee"

He took the guilty sinner's place,
Suffered the hidings of God's face
Alone; but of the Love He says—
"For Me *and* thee."

The conflict His, the anguish keen,
He had no arm on which to lean;
But says, in Victory's brighter scene—
"For Me *and* thee."

O Saviour! raise each drooping heart,
Make it forget its sorrow's smart,
With the sweet thought these words impart—
"*For Me and thee.*"

One with Thyself, oh let us prove
The wonders of Thy matchless love!
And whisper from Thy Throne above—
"For Me *and* thee."

HE FOUND THEM SLEEPING FOR SORROW.

SLEEP not! child of Earth so weary—
Sleep not, though the way be dreary;
Rise and pray, whate'er befall thee
Let not grief from Duty call thee,
Rise and pray!

In the garden all forsaken,
See thy Lord with anguish shaken;
Did He sleep because of sorrow,
Gathering tenfold for the morrow?
Did He sleep?

No! midst darkness all appalling,
To His Father He was calling;
Calling still, with grief so stricken,
As the clouds did round him thicken,
Calling still!

Nor alone was Jesus pleading,
When He knelt thus worn and bleeding,
He was *yielding* and *obeying*,
"Not my will," oh hear Him saying—
"Not my will!"

Then if thou thy grief would vanquish,
In dull slumber cease to languish;
Like thy Saviour, upwards yearning,
To thy Father still be turning,
Like Thy Saviour!

Whatsoe'er may gather o'er thee,
Gird thee for the toils before thee!
Take thy Cross, and meekly yielding
Thou a staff of strength art wielding,
Take thy Cross!

"*WE KNOW IN PART.*"

1 JOHN iii. 2.

"WE know," and yet "we know not,"
Faith's visions cheer our eyes,
But far the happy Future
Above our hopes will rise.
'Tis but a glimpse of glory,
A little seed of light,
Now given, as precious earnests,
To pilgrims in the night.

"We know," and yet "we know not,"
Jesus is ours to bless;
The whispers of His Spirit
Reveal His wondrous grace.
We hear Him ever speaking,
We feel Him ever near;
But when we gaze upon Him
How changed will all appear!

"We know," and yet "we know not,"
Our Father's love is sweet;
We trust His promised guidance
To keep our tottering feet.
But feebly do we measure
That watchful, mighty care,
Which holds Creation's balance,
And counts each tiny hair.

"We know," and yet "we know not,"
The Tempter's subtle power,
The snares in secret working
Each day, each passing hour.

The world, with its enticements,
The flesh in sin so bound;
We shall not know these perils
Till safe on heavenly ground.

"We know," and yet "we know not,"
How weakly we believe;
Self-love perverts our judgments,
A thousand things deceive;
As children darkly groping,
And stumbling as they go,
How little should we trust ourselves
In what we think we know!

Thank God for all the knowledge
His Spirit now has given;
But onward press to fuller light,
To clearer views of heaven;
Till, seeing Jesus "as He is,"
All else shall easy be,
And every cloud and shadow
Before His face shall flee!

WHAT IS IT?

An Acrostic.

P recious grace to pilgrims given
A s they tread the road to heaven;
T ribulations oft abound,
I n their path sharp thorns are found;
E very trial seems but light,
N eath its influence calm and bright;
C ountless needs call forth its power,
E ach one answered, asks for more.

THE BEST JEWEL.

TO MY LITTLE GIRL, WITH THE BIRTHDAY PRESENT OF A BROOCH.

How bright soe'er this gem may be,
How glittering this gold,
Its cost and worth in earthly price
Can very soon be told.

Keep it, as token fond and fair
Of a mother's tender love,
And let it oft remind my child
Of better gems above.

There is a jewel brighter far,
And set in Heaven's pure gold—
This jewel's cost and wondrous worth
Can *never* here be told.

He wore it whom no spot of sin
Could touch or e'er defile,
The Precious, holy Lamb of God,
The Saviour without guile.

And, given by Him, they wore it too
Who followed as He led,
A patient, humble pilgrim train,
To this vain world all dead.

Not sparkling for the gaze of man
This jewel fair will be,
But hidden in the inmost soul
For God Himself to see.

Then, dearest child, be this your prayer—
May God to me impart
This precious gem which Jesus wore,
The gem of a lowly heart!

QUIET BEHIND MY SHIELD.

Suggested by a description given by Mrs. Daniell of the attitude of a Christian soldier in some illustrations of the Pilgrim's Progress.

WHEN all alone
Upon the battle-field,
I see the marshalled hosts step on
With whom my weakness cannot cope,
Where can I rest in dauntless hope?
Quiet behind my shield.

It matters not
Upon Christ's battle-field
That *few* are near or *many* crowd the spot;
Though thousands against one combine,
That one is armed with strength Divine,
Quiet behind God's shield.

Strong, strong the foe
Upon that battle-field;
He comes to lay God's Israel low;
But stronger far our Prince is found,
He keeps His soldiers on the ground,
Quiet behind His shield.

Quiet in heart
Upon that battle-field,
But brave in soul to do the hero's part;
For valorous deed and courage not of earth
Are his who firmly stands, knowing its worth,
Quiet behind God's shield.

The arrows fly
Thick on the battle-field;
But harmless they will pass him by
Who, in the confidence of filial trust,
Rests while he *fights*, with self laid in the dust,
Quiet behind God's shield.

ALL SAFE TO LAND.

"And so it came to pass, that they escaped all safe to land."
—Acts xxvii. 44.

"All safe to land," through storm and calm,
Tempest and cloud, the little flock
To whom the Father promises the rest
Shall come, unharmed by wave or rock.

All safe *to land*, no loss of life
If Christ is in the vessel, those
With Him, enrolled in heaven, reach their home,
Through perils brought to sweet repose.

All *safe* to land, though thy frail bark
May struggle through a wintry night,
Day without sun, and evening without star,
Yet shalt thou know the joy of light.

Take courage! but a little while,
And ye who form the pilgrim band,
Brother with brother, friend with parted friend,
Shall meet for ever "*safe* on *land*."

Not one forgotten, He who holds
The waters in the hollow of His hand,
Numbers His chosen few and misses none,
But brings them in "*all* safe to land."

Lord, midst the storms that yet may rise,
Though trembling, help me still by faith to stand;
And when the last cold wave shall o'er me roll,
May it but bear me "safe to land!"

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